

# Life of Stephen Coester

Updated 3/26/17



**For people of my age World War II was a current event** because we were alive when it ended. But WWI which had ended just twenty-three years before we were born was ancient history and the Civil War might as well been in the age of the Roman Empire, although as little kids we were still fighting it at least in Missouri. Half the boys would have on Union blue kepis and half would have Confederate gray. We knew Grant and Lee and even the names of their horses: Cincinnati and Traveler. And when we visited Mississippi those kids were violent in their hatred for us Yankees.

As I got older I began to realize that those battles and other historic events weren't really so long ago. From the end of the Civil War until my birth was seventy-six years so the

span of time to my present age from the Civil War is just two of my lifetimes. For anyone my age you know how darn fast those years have flown by.

I suddenly realized that a lot of history has occurred during my seventy-five plus years so decided to write this history.

**I was born in Deaconess Hospital in St. Louis 7-14-1941.** During World War Two we stayed with Momma Wolf and Otto, my maternal grandparents in their home at 325 Stark Court Webster Groves, Mo. while my father was up in the Yukon surveying the Alaska Highway.



325 Stark Ct

In about 1963 my grandparent moved to an apartment and my parents moved into the Stark Court home for a short time.

**Perhaps right here is a good place to say a little about where I came from.** My parents are Samuel Holliday

Coester and Lois Grace Wolf Coester. My paternal grandparents are Frederick Coester and Florence Holliday Coester. Maternal grandparents are Otto Wolf and Sophie Lange Wolf. All except the Hollidays are German and immigrated to the U.S in the mid 1800s. The Hollidays were Scotch-Irish and were here since the late 1700s. I have one sibling, a brother Jan Wolf Coester who is two years older than me. I have the same wife for fifty-three years, Yvonne Eva Lind Coester; two children Dean Coester (born 5/21/64) and Yvette Miller (born 7/6/66) who are both single; and three grandchildren Stephen Miller (25), Kristen Coester Custer (24) and Nickolas Coester (19.)

What genealogical information I have is in [Appendix 13](#).

My only memories of WWII are blackout curtains, ration books, and seeing the troops march in St. Louis after returning in 1946. I was born five month before Pearl Harbor and was four when the war against Japan ended.

**After the war** we lived in a little bitsy wooden creosote painted house , more of a shack on Westside Ave by the railroad tracks, in Webster Groves, MO until I was eight years old. My brother Jan's and my room was about six feet by nine feet and we had a bunk bed that took up most of the space. We did have a big back yard where we played baseball endlessly. We just had a radio on which we would gather at the kitchen table and listen to shows like The Lone Ranger, The Shadow, and Sargent Preston of the Yukon. Listening to the Cardinals baseball or the Hawks basketball on radio was more real than watching them on TV.

One story from when I was four years old and had just moved to Westside was often told by my grandmother to show how "cute" I was. One day I was told to go to the little "corner market", which were small family owned stores equivalent to the 7-11 of today, and get a dozen eggs. This involved crossing Big Bend Blvd, which was the major road

through Webster Groves. In later years my parents would be in jail and I would have been in foster care for them allowing me to do that at four years old. I made it to the store and carefully counted out twelve eggs. In 1946 eggs didn't come in cartons. They were in a big box and you would put them in a paper bag. As I walked home I noticed hen feathers on some of the eggs. When I got home my mom took the eggs and noticed that now there were only eight eggs not twelve. She asked me why and I straight out told her that four were dirty do I threw them out. Now isn't that too cute?

My biggest memories from there were attending Goodall Elementary School, learning to ride a 26" bike at age four, waiting for the iceman to make his deliveries to neighbor's iceboxes so we could snag a few slivers, and seeing my first TV at a neighbor's which had a round screen about six inches round. We were fortunate to have an electric refrigerator. The milkman still had a horse and wagon for his deliveries and there were still lots of horse drawn wagons in downtown St. Louis. In 2017 milk delivery is long in the past.



Also there were electric street cars downtown.



All my childhood Mom just had a wringer washing machine and hung the clothes outside on the line in heat or cold.



And here's a typical 2017 washer and dryer.



My parents never worried if we were gone all day out in the woods or walking the railroad tracks. Cowboys and Indians was the game of choice. A friend of my Dad's gave my brother Jan and me an old black powder, percussion cap rifle when we were about eight and six. We would use it to play with and managed to do what the Civil War soldiers had failed to do. We broke off the stock and had to tape it back together with black electrical tape (the precursor to duct tape). The gun was a Smith Carbine from the Civil War.  
Here's one in the Gettysburg museum.



**In about 1949 we moved to a nicer house at 516 McLain Lane in Kirkwood, Mo.**



The room over the garage was Jan and mine. The trees in the photo were there and we would climb and fall out of them. We got the first dog I remember, Nipper then and he lived

until I graduated from college. I grew up in this house until I was thirteen. Attended Robinson Elementary through sixth grade where I was proud to be a Patrol Boy getting to wear a badge and help the kids across the street at school. Was in Cub and Boy Scouts until I was twelve and found out girls were more interesting.



Nipper



Boy Scouts Order of the Arrow

My Dad's first car, a 1948 Nash Ambassador.



We played Koury League baseball. We were taught to shoot and I'd regularly take the .22 rifle out in the woods by myself at age ten or so. We had a shooting range the length of our basement. I only hunted a few times with friends. Got a rabbit or squirrel or two. Shot at a deer and missed.



My 1905 Winchester .22 rifle. I still have it.



Jan sitting and Steve

We got our first TV in about 1950. Black and White and just three channels. Our first color set we got in 1967 and I actually built a 25" Heathkit TV and a stereo receiver that we had for years



Here's today's (2017) TV.



Here's a typical stereo , tape deck and record player from about 1970 and a 2017 iPod that does infinitely more.





2017 Ipod

Recorded music advanced from records to reel to reel tapes to 8 track tapes to cassette tapes and then to CDs and DVDs and by 2017 to tiny cards or thumb drives that hold thousands of records..



Here's where I attended school from third to sixth grade.



Robinson School

Every school had a couple of kids with crutches and braces from polio. In 1954 we got inoculated for the first time and polio almost disappeared. Penicillin was widely used in WWII in the forties. Before that like in 1918 20 million people died of the flu of all things.

I was a good student and never had any homework at night because I always did the next day's assignment at school while the teacher was explaining the last one. I was in sixth grade sat next to the World Book Encyclopedias and I would

always grab one to read when I was bored. I could spout off a paragraph about every subject in the World. It was from reading them that I learned about the Naval Academy and started my quest to get to go there. Also about that time a WWII documentary, Victory at Sea, was on. It also made me want to Go Navy. I still love the Richard Rogers music from that show.



When we moved to Kirkwood, MO, I was way behind the third grade kids at Robinson School when we moved and had to learn the multiplication tables really fast.

Jan and I did a lot of horseback riding at Valley Mount Ranch even “working” there during one summer when I was eight or nine in exchange for rides. We would ride our bikes down Marshall Rd. out past Treecourt Pool to get there. We had to go about a mile along Highway 66 to get there. On day my tire slipped on the raised edge of the road and I fell into the traffic. almost got run over. Total ride was about six miles each way and Marshall Road was a mile long hill that could get us up to fifty miles an hour going down and we had to walk our bikes up. Can you imagine letting kids do that now? My Dad’s philosophy was to let us run loose and if we wanted to do something we had to get there on our own. He refused to take us to the movies so we had to walk, which I hated as a seventh grader, but loved the freedom later.



Since Dad worked at Lambert Field airport, Jan and I spent lots of summertime hanging around the hanger and airplanes and flew a lot. I was a nervous flyer and had a fear of heights until later at the Naval Academy, where peer pressure made me do things and I found out “ the only thing to fear is fear itself”. See [Appendix 1](#) for such a story.



Piper Cub

**From seventh to ninth grade** I went to Nipher Junior High in Kirkwood.

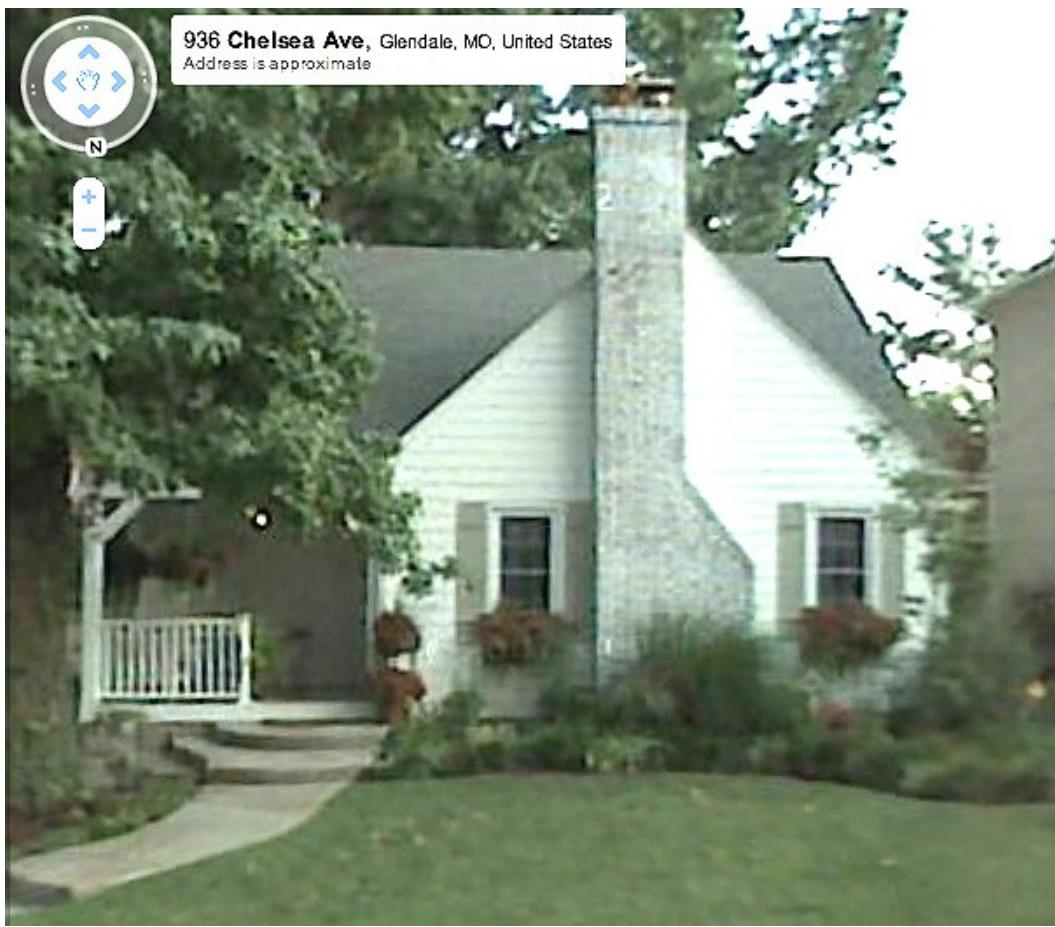


Nipher Junior High

At Nipher (what a name) my first friends were Lacky Browder and Jamie Carlin. What a difference. Remember how rolly polly Lacky was. Well soon as I became a sophisticated Junior High seventh grader, I dropped Lacky for the clique. Carlin and I were always stealing hubcaps and tailpipe extensions and shoplifting Playboys just for the hell of it. Fortunately, I saw that he was always going to be in trouble and I steered away. About that time tennis and Del Campbell came into my life and kept me on the straight and narrow pretty much. We became best friends through high school and spent many days at his house wrestling in the back yard, shooting hoops, and playing together. And then there was tennis. We started tennis together and during our last three years of high school had thirty-five wins and just one loss. Del remains nationally ranked in age group well into his seventies.

I was on Student Council at Nipher and through high school.

**While at Nipher we moved a couple of miles to 936 Chelsea in Glendale, Mo.**



The whole attic was one room finished in knotty pine and was our bedroom, a huge not insulated room burning in the summer and freezing in the winters., but a neat hideout for us. We had a pingpong table up there.

Up to the time I was about twelve, Dad tried very hard to be a good father with Scouts, shooting and riding, but after that he became an alcoholic, and homelife became hell with lots of yelling and fighting. I detested him until he smashed our pink and black '55 Desoto (bought while drunk) and then joined AA when I was 16. That car looked like this



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That's when we ended up with the 54 Buick; great car!



Poor Jan never had a good father because he went away to college about that time, but Dad was okay after he quit drinking in my Junior and Senior years, although by that time we were busy being independent young men. Dad went on and off the juice the rest of his life and caused Yvonne and me lots of problems until his death in 1993. Mom and Dad move near us in about 1975.

**For the last three years of high school attended Kirkwood High School.**



Great three years at KHS. I was in the top ten percent, a student officer, a varsity athlete and got along with everybody. As soon as I reached sixteen I bought my first car, a 1949 Mercury for \$250. Even though our family was among the poorest in a very affluent area, I was the envy of my peers by having my own car. I afforded it by working as a golf caddy from the time I was eleven and then at Treecourt Pool all through junior and senior high. Started there as a locker boy, became a cook and finally a lifeguard when I was old enough. I also drove a nursery school bus mornings and evenings. I earned \$2 to cut a yard, \$5 for caddying doubles (two bags) 18 holes, 35 cents per hour to babysit, \$30 to \$45 per week at Treecourt Swimming Pool and \$100 a month driving nursery school kids to and from school. Should have had a chauffeur's license but didn't. My allowance was \$2.50 a week that could either pay to ride the bus to school, buy lunch or date. After age 13, I paid for all of my clothes. Dad paid my auto insurance.



### 1949 Mercury

That car got me in a lot of trouble. One time Del and I were drag racing down highway US 66 and got pulled over by some hick sheriff. He was also mayor of his one horse town. He asked us if \$50 would be too much. We paid him off and no record was made.

More seriously in a race between a '57 Plymouth and a '57 Chevy , we were speeding along side by side in both lanes of a two lane road after midnight at over a hundred miles per hour. I was riding shotgun. The drivers had no concern that in front of us was a major intersection. By sheer chance as we approached another car was coming from our right.

Screeching of brakes and sliding sideways barely missing the other car, we safely made it past. My driver was really shook up and slowed down and pulled off the road only to slide down into a roadside ditch. We had to call his dad and a wrecker. He came up with come creative tale that I'm sure his dad didn't believe for a second. That was so close it could have been the end of this whole bio.

Basketball was my first love, but unfortunately all I had was a great jump shot. No moves, no height. I never played a second on the 9th grade team. As a senior I thought I should

have been on the team, but Coach Miller had different thoughts, plus I had shin splints something horrible and could barely hobble. He advised me to stick with tennis. Later I was a "star" in navy intramurals and adult leagues and once scored 34 points in a game, not a season. Oh, dreams of glory! Tennis was second to b-ball but I could earn my letter and learned to love it as I improved.

Until I went to college my Dad made \$100 per week. Mom made \$50 a week on an assembly line making Kotex. I knew that others were "rich" but I never felt "poor". We always had a car ('48 Nash) and a refrigerator. Mom never had any washer except a wringer one and hung up all the clothes outside in summer or freezing winter. We wore cheap Keds tennis shoes, \$3, to school and by Christmas they were ripped out at the sides. We wore them with our socks hanging out until the next year. When I became a teenager I paid for Converse All Stars for \$8. Wore either Levis and white tee shirts or khakis and button down shirts depending if we were James Dean or Pat Boone that day. Jeans were about \$4, button down dress shirts \$5 and a good suit \$50.

Birdseye frozen food has been around since the 1930s as had TV.

However the early ones had a circular CRT in a massive cabinet. Before I was eight I only remember one family with a TV. We got our first one in 1950 so I was nine and as I remember it was actually pretty modern, rectangular CRT and good quality. Just ABC, NBC and CBS for about ten hours a day. Howdy Doodie, Lone Ranger, Roy Rogers, Milton Berl, Ed Sullivan, Steve Allen. Lots of test patterns.

We never were religious. I went to church only during basketball season so I'd qualify to play church league b-ball.

An incident that really affected my life occurred between seventh and eighth grades. I was molested by Coach Carroll the ninth grade football coach and Civics teacher. As soon

as he tried to touch me I escaped, but for the rest of my time in Kirkwood I would get the chills whenever I saw a blue and white Ford hardtop like he drove. Of course, at age 13, I had no idea how to handle the situation and I can't imagine how my parents could have been so naive. They even had him over to the house. Fortunately somebody else turned him in.

Then there were the girls. Karin Grosse was my first girlfriend in seventh grade. We would walk home together to my house then she'd continue on to hers. Next came a hot and heavy eighth grade romance with Sybil Brooks. I don't remember how that ended, but she taught me how to kiss. Oh somewhere there was Ruthie Hatfield for a while. She was beautiful when I saw her later in college years. Judy Breil was always my dream girl, but I never asked her out. I'll always remember one party in eighth grade when she had a spat with her boyfriend (Carlin, I think) and I danced and snuggled with her all evening. I don't remember girls in 9th and 10th grade before I could drive, and then came Maria Von Schuschnigg. We weresteadies most of 11th grade and the first real love of my life. I still have regrets because I dropped her in twelfth grade because she was acting really "strange". Later I learned that her Mother whom I adored was dying of cancer. During college we again dated whenever I was home and I thought we would one day marry---until I met Yvonne. Dr. Von Schuschnigg, the Chancellor of Austria in 1938 when Hitler invaded, and I had some weighty discussions, which I still treasure. He liked me and/or my USNA uniform. I never have known whether Maria was upset or not about me marrying Yvonne, so I guess she wasn't. She married some Count from France. Senior year of high school I played the cool stud dating the Junior class girls and must have dated 15 different girls. I loved Senior year! In college I also dated Karin Grosse again and she actually came to my Junior Ring Dance at Annapolis where I met and fell in love with Yvonne. Karin and I were really good friends. I visited her Mom in 1985 when I was in St. Louis for my grandmother's funeral.

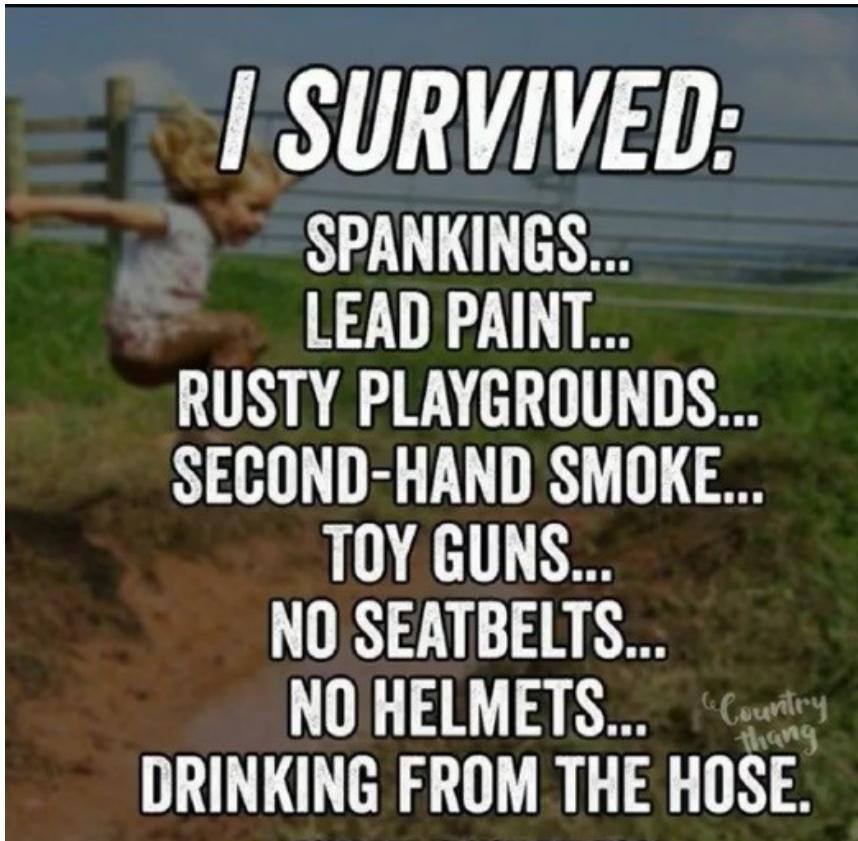
We were post big band era. We started Rock and Roll in the '50s.

McDonalds came to Kirkwood about 1955. 15 cents for a burger. We had malt shops and Parkways which were like Dennys where we hung out after ball games and dates. Also Steak and Shake or A&W Root Beer with the waitresses on roller skates. Dates were going downtown to St. Louis to the movies ( 60 cents) in the enormous old time theaters. Or to watch the Cardinals play baseball (\$3). A really serious date was a evening cruise on the Mississippi on the SS Admiral stern wheeler. It looked super modern then and still looks modern today.



My Mom died in 1985 at age sixty-five and Dad at 76 in 1993. both from smoking related cancers.

This photo pretty well sums up how kids were raised in the 1940s and 1950s.



**I SURVIVED:**

**SPANKINGS...**

**LEAD PAINT...**

**RUSTY PLAYGROUNDS...**

**SECOND-HAND SMOKE...**

**TOY GUNS...**

**NO SEATBELTS...**

**NO HELMETS...**

**DRINKING FROM THE HOSE.**

*Country  
Thang*

**Finally on to the Naval Academy.**





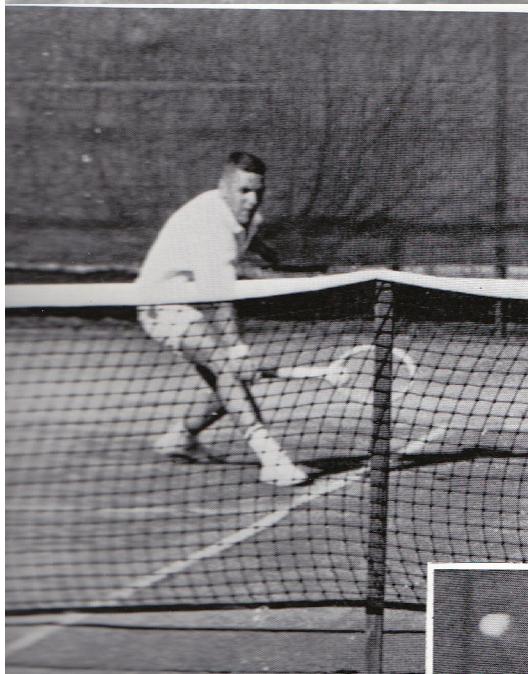
I always do things the hard way. It wasn't until May '59 that I finally got accepted to the Naval Academy to report July 7, 1959. I had no idea where I was going if I didn't get the appointment. On what slender threads our lives revolve. I had two second alternate appointments and both guys ahead of me got in. (one ended up the Brigade Commander). I was accepted under the "qualified alternates" law. I was sure all midshipmen would be 6'4", student body presidents, star athletes etc., and here comes 5'8" Steve who had lost the Junior Class President election while running unopposed to Frank MacDougal. What a humiliation!

For my recollection of my first day at the Academy see  
[Appendix 2](#) or

<http://www.usna63.org/tradition/history/7July1959.html>.

Well the four years at USNA were the best of my pre-married life. I ate it up and gloried in being there where I had dreamed of going since I first saw a World Book article at Robinson Elementary. After an average first year, they saw the light and placed me in advance classes where one was almost assured good grades. In the Junior year I was number two in my class overall. I had a great scholastic year as well as being in the top 10% in all the P.E. and being a real grease ball militarily. As a Plebe I decided I was going to

be a boxer and I trained and trained and was hard as nails. Unfortunately, I found out I have the reflexes of a slug and could deliver one punch to my opponents three. At least I learned it doesn't hurt too badly to get hit which happened often. So after missing the summer tennis season, I begged for a chance to try out for the Plebe team. Okay start at the bottom and beat everyone the coach said. I managed to make Number 5 singles and three doubles and I got my plebe letter.



Well that didn't put me in good stead for the Varsity, but I hung in there and stayed on the team the next year but nonplaying. Second class year I was going great guns at

number 4 for eight matches and then separated my right wrist. Needed one more match to letter and didn't get it. Senior year we switched coaches and he said he didn't want any non-lettered Seniors. Again I begged and went through the same drill of having to beat every one. Ended up number one during the fall season (while the real number one and two were playing squash). During the real Spring season I was number three but in a strategic move the coach played me at number 5 singles and three doubles where I had a marvelous season, including two wins over Army. I was down 5-3 in the last two sets and won both 7-5; the highlight of my tennis career with Jan watching!



Those were also the glory years for Navy football; Belino, Staubach and four victories over Army.

Because I was smart and because of tennis I had a pretty easy time at the Naval Academy. During plebe year, which is a whole year of hell week with full scale harassment from the upper classmen, I was on athletic training tables for two-thirds of the time. There you were treated like a jock and

avoided most of the harassment. Of course when I wasn't on the training table I was fair game, but since I was pretty squared away I never had much trouble.

Academics were always easy for me and I had good discipline. After each class I would return to my room and immediately do my assignments. At night when everyone else was working late, I was finished and could relax. I never had to cram for final exams, figuring I either knew the material or not...and generally I guess I did because I ended up in the top ten percent and was a wearer of "stars" for academic achievement.



I was also in the Color Company one year. I was one of the top forty midshipman officers, a "three striper". I ate up the cruises, the ships, flying jet fighters and all that macho stuff. I thought I would be a pilot or a SEAL

We marched in JFK's Inaugural parade in freezing weather.



Here's a neat video of a movie made when I was a plebe. I star as a tennis player: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mBbZn8epT-Y>

Anyway, I was this hotshot midshipman officer and the day before Christmas leave we decided to have a little party in my room. The alcohol flowed freely in violation of USNA and Maryland State law and about 13 of my classmates and me were caught by a Marine Major Officer of the Day. The good news was that there were too many of us "good guys" to throw out. The bad news was that we were restricted to quarters for 90 days. See [Appendix 3](#). I didn't realize until graduation that it also affected my class standing dropping me from the top twenty to number 99 of 850 graduates which still wasn't too bad.

At the Naval Academy you didn't get three months off during the summer. You just got one month of leave during which you could go home or take additional training like Airborne parachute jumping or SEAL SCUBA classes. I went home and for the first time in my life didn't work. I played lots of tennis and became a pretty fair golfer.

The other two months of the summer were spent either on cruise or in aviation and Marine Corps training. The summer

after my first year I was aboard the USS Macon, a WWII heavy cruiser. We were treated as enlisted sailors and did all of the heavy work like polishing brass and holy stoning the wooden decks. Also learned navigation and how to fire the massive 8" guns. It was on the Macon that naval gunfire deafened my right ear. We visited the ports of Quebec, Canada, Bermuda and Provincetown, MA.



Second Class summer we had firefighting school in Philadelphia and Marine Corps training at Virginia Beach which included a full scale amphibious landing with gunfire and bombs. Learned to crawl through the mud under and over barbed wire with machine gun bullets ripping the air over my head. Great fun. On amphibious landing day most of us had to go out the day before to the ships waiting offshore and wait in the rolling seas until the next morning. I was assigned to a helicopter squad so we spent the evening in the O'Club and casually boarded the helicopter the next morning, took a ten minute ride and assaulted the beach, walked up the sand and watched the rest of the operation from the viewing bleachers. A tough life.

The highlight of that summer was aviation training at Pensacola and Jacksonville. We learned to fly the T-34 Mentor and got to the point of doing all of the takeoffs and landings.



*© 2012 Eric Van Gilder*

We also got an introduction to the T-28 Trojan which was a powerful trainer equivalent to a WWII fighter. The torque was strong on that plane.



We learned basic flying skills and did a lot of rolls and loops and spins.

Finally at Pensacola we had a few hops on the T2J Buckeye, the basic jet trainer.



While at Pensacola I played tennis with the Admiral in searing heat. Afterward I returned to the barracks and took a drink of ice cold water. I felt a terrible pain in my chest and the next thing I knew I woke up jammed between the water cooler and the wall. I didn't understand what happened and didn't report to sick bay and felt okay, but this was probably the first manifestation of my heart problem that resulted in my discharge from the Navy a couple of years later.

Then it was over to Jacksonville where we got to fly the P2V Neptune antisubmarine aircraft and the R4D, the Navy version of the venerable DC3. What a great way to spend the summer.

We also trained on the Dilbert Dunker, a diabolical machine that acts like a plane ditching in the ocean. It crashes into the water and flips over and you have to release your harness and escape before drowning.



My final cruise after my third year was on the aircraft carrier the USS Randolph. Now we were treated as junior officers and performed duties like Officer of the Deck, replenishment and Navigator. We visited Morocco, Sicily, Canne, France and Valencia, Spain. We got to fly off of the carrier and I controlled a helicopter in flight.

Photo # NH 67959 USS Randolph & USS Waller refueling from USS Pawcatuck



In Spain, a call came over the Randolph's PA system for any Naval Academy tennis players to report to the Flag bridge where the Admiral was. My teammate Lanny Cox and I promptly reported and were told we had a tennis match against the mayor of Valencia. I played with the Admiral and we won. Fun patting the Admiral on the ass with my tennis racket and saying, "Great shot, Sir." After the match the happy admiral invited us to a reception he was holding for the mayor that evening. We arrived at the appointed time in our dress uniforms only to be turned away at the door by the Flag Lieutenant who thought we were crashing the party. I told him he had better check with the Admiral which he did. The Admiral came out drink in hand, put his arm around my shoulder and took me in and introduced me to everyone as his winning tennis partner.

On that cruise while returning across the Atlantic Ocean we ran through a hurricane and picture the Randolph taking green water over its flight deck which is normally sixty feet

above the water. I went up to the bow and stood on the catwalk while the bow rose and fell. Just before the water came rushing by I would duck into a hatch and slam it shut behind me. Not too smart in retrospect, but a real thrill ride!

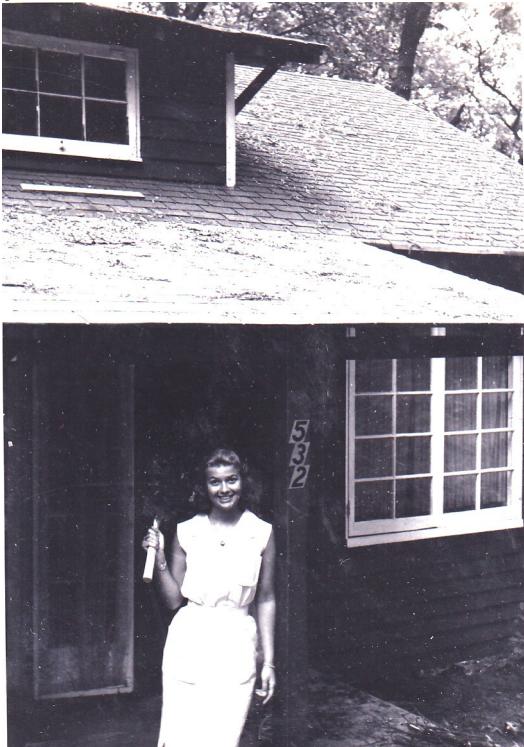
While at USNA I was also a Rhodes Scholar nominee, but the liberal selection committee didn't choose me despite my sterling qualifications. Like I said I really loved that place and was prepared to have a long Navy career. Then things started unraveling. I flunked my flight physical because my hearing was damaged by naval gunfire. My only choices after graduation were Supply Corps or Civil Engineer Corps, neither of which was high on the list of a 21-year-old jock. The CEC only took 10 graduates and guaranteed grad school, but I made the cut.

My Naval Academy yearbook entry:

"Steve, or "Stevie B.," as we know him, entered the Naval Academy after graduating from high school in the land of mules and corn cob pipes, better known as Missouri. Steve never had time to be smoking the old corn cob pipe in Bancroft Hall, because he was too busy trying to beat the academic departments. Evidently, he found some degree of success in this endeavor, being constantly on the Superintendent's List and a wearer of "Stars". This he did without studying as much as the rest of us. Academics were not the only thing that came easily to Steve. Though small in stature, he was a fine athlete who lent his strong right arm to the varsity tennis team each year and excelled on the company basketball team during the winter months. The "Show-Me" state's contribution to the Navy has definitely shown us."

Cut back to June Week of 1962. I was offered the chance for a blind date with a Swedish girl.

I rejected it because I just didn't think I could handle Anita Ekberg. I invited Karin instead from back home. By this time Karin was just a great friend. I think she was going with Rick Clark a fellow high school tennis friend. We installed all of the girls in a vacation cabin in Sherwood Forest. The first time I drove up I saw this gorgeous blond standing on the porch and knew I had made a terrible mistake.



One of my buddies (who ended up spending years in the Hanoi Hilton) took the blind date. Karin and I had a good June Week and as the partying got going I danced and necked a little with Yvonne, but nothing really happened. When I went home on summer leave, Karin, bless her heart, mentioned that Yvonne liked me and that I should write her. I sent her a card with picture (so she'd know which midshipman I was) and to my great surprise she responded. After my summer cruise I visited her in New York and we immediately fell in love and lust.



Yvonne came to the Naval Academy a couple of times, usually while I had a tennis match, I went to N.Y. a couple of times and she met my folks at the Army-Navy Game and then it was almost Christmas and her ticket expired so she went home.



Well as mentioned above I was on restriction so it was as well that she wasn't around. We corresponded almost daily and after only about six real dates got engaged by mail. After graduation I hooked a hop to Europe and eventually got to Sweden. We were unsure about getting married, but what the hell, the bridal gown was already borrowed so we decided to go ahead. We spent a glorious week on a Swedish resort island before the wedding and decided it would be immoral not to complete the deed. Her poor parents! Mine were thrilled I could get anyone.



Our wedding is still the talk of Sundbyberg, Sweden; dashing U.S. Naval officer and glamorous model. I had almost zero money but I did have a Phillips 66 credit card and a 1960 Ford. Yvonne paid for our DC-4 Icelandic flight to N.Y rather than risk the idiosyncrasies of trying to get a hop. That took care of her money. We headed to Port Huemene, Ca for CEC school on love and nothing else.. God were we in love.... until I saw her eat fried chicken at a greasy spoon in Indiana with knife and fork using the wrong damn hands European style! That was our first and last fight. After I recovered from her beating, she explained that she'd do whatever the hell she wants! Once I learned this simple lesson, we've lived relatively happily ever after.

**Well we ended up in Public Works at Lemoore Naval Air Station** where all I did was play tennis, golf, squash and badminton with the senior officers and play at being Transportation Officer and Division Officer. The base was brand new so the facilities and quarters were nice and clean. There were a lot of challenges for our Public Works Department solving startup problems.

One of my assignments in 1964 was to design a pedestal to hold an A-4 Skyhawk near the entrance. After my Seabees completed the big concrete pedestal we mounted a Seabee statue on top of it and had a dedication ceremony. We didn't have the A-4 yet. They were phasing out the A-1 Skyraider at that time and during the ceremony the A-1 squadron flew over in formation and dropped leaflets. We picked them up and they paraphrased the old Tareyton cigarette commercial saying " We'd Rather Fight than Switch!"



Here's a A-1 Skyraider mounted on a similar pedestal.



As a newly commissioned Naval Academy grad I was often called upon for special assignments. Shortly after our arrival at Lemoore. I was called to the Base Commander, Captain Breen's office and told to prepare a speech for him on naval leadership. Then he called again to have me show him how to tie a mourning knot on his sword. We had swords at the Academy but not the knots so Commander Rumble and I rushed to the Navy Uniform Regulations and studied up on how to tie the knot. I went to the captain's office and acted like I did this every day. He was impressed.



The base was overrun with jackrabbits. Every night I had to tour all of the base's Public Works stations and I would see hundreds of these critters. They were a big problem because they loved to gnaw on the electrical cables. Every so often

we would organize a hunt. Sailors would be given shotguns and we would hike across the base blasting them.

My Public Works commander, Commander Rumble was a sports nut and he and I would regularly go to the YMCA in Fresno to play squash. One day he told me that he and I were going to play in a big badminton tournament. Neither of us had ever played except at backyard picnics. About that time I got an engraved invitation to attend a fancy dinner with my wife hosted by the base commander. It was the same evening as the badminton tournament. I asked Commander Rumble what I should do and he said the tournament was more important. So I called the Executive Officer to cancel the dinner and he said it must have been a mistake anyway for a lowly ensign to be invited and to not worry about it. So we played badminton instead and saw what a hard sport it is, but we won second place anyway since I had basic racket skills. The following Monday. Commander Rumble got a tongue lashing from Captain Breen asking where the hell was Ensign Coester. I seems that the party was in honor of some Norwegian naval officers and he wanted my lovely Scandinavian wife there to converse with the Norwegians.

Yvonne got pregnant after three months instead of three years of marriage after a wonderful day at Disneyland where we danced to the Glen Miller orchestra and apparently got "In the Mood." We spent lots of time hiking in Sequoia and Yosemite and life was a dream as newly weds. Yvonne was ogled by all the officers and I was the current Naval Academy grad in a then very "club" oriented Navy.

A big celebration at the Lemoore O'club was planned for Yvonne's 21st birthday which was abruptly canceled when President Kennedy was assassinated on her day, November 22, 1963.

One day I was in the dentist office for a routine exam and my heart felt funny. I went home and pretty soon I was faint and disabled. Yvonne took me to the dispensary and they told her I was dying; and she was 8 months pregnant in a strange land! It turned out I had had Wolff-Parkinson-White syndrome since birth and it decided to cause fibrillation at that time. Since then I've had about four other "near death" experiences including the paddles, but I never saw the bright white light. In 1998 I had a brand new procedure where they insert three catheters into the heart, map out the bad nerve bundles and burn them out. I've been fine ever since. Also I started getting arthritis in my hands and feet at about twenty-two which eventually has lead to pretty bad disfigurement of the hands and the end of a stunningly unspectacular tennis career until I resumed playing when I turned sixty-two. I pretty much quit playing at 35 after always being number two or three in our area. Obviously I didn't die, but my cherished naval career was over. While they were in the process of discharging me from the Navy, , I won the 12th Naval District Doubles title and took second in singles. Dean was born 5-21-64 in Lemoore NAS hospital. His daughter, Kristen, was born there Valentine Day, 1993. Then Nick was also born at Lemoore in 1997. Three Coesters born in the same rinky-dink Navy hospital. To my never-ending regret I was out playing tennis when Dean was born. Yvonne brings that up now and again.

What was a 22-year-old to do now? I thought of Tennis Pro, Forest Ranger, etc., but got practical and started applying for engineering jobs. We also decided to go cross-country to Florida where Mom and Dad were living since the Navy would pay for the trip. So dog, cat, 3 month old Dean and four-year-old Ford headed East. We purchased a Coleman stove for the trip that we still use on our camping trips. Mom and Dad were living in a luxury home with no furniture, having been swindled out of all their money by a con man that found my Dad an easy mark. He never recovered from that experience and the last 25 years of his life were pretty shabby.



**I got a job with Boeing at KSC on the Apollo program** paying \$10000 a year which included "swamp pay" for living in an uncivilized region. I knew I wanted to be one of those directly involved in the launches. I got transferred from a support job to a test engineer position in the Liquid Hydrogen facility and participated in all the Apollo launches in the Firing Room. Now, years later I realize what an achievement those flights were; Apollo 8, Apollo 11, and Apollo 13 and all the others. See [Appendix 4](#) for my Apollo 11 tale.



In July 1966 Yvette was born in Rockledge at Wuesthoff Hospital. We got involved in SCUBA in 1967 and it consumed our time and money for 25 years. We've traveled the Caribbean, Mexico and Central America diving and the kids became fish. For \$27 per person we could have a three day dive trip to the Bahamas including food and air.



See [Appendix 9-12](#) for some of my SCUBA stories

We also camped a lot because it was cheap (\$3) and I could pretend I was still in Boy Scouts. Remember Order of the Arrow?

**After Apollo NASA nearly disappeared. I was lucky to get a job with General Dynamics** launching Atlas-Centaur unmanned rockets at \$16000 a year where I handled the pneumatic systems for about 35 missions and 5 years. We put up all of the telephone satellites.



**I thought I saw the light after the successful Shuttle landing tests when they said all unmanned rockets would be phased out and went to work for Rockwell as Supervisor of the Space Shuttle Main Propulsion System.** They are still launching Atlas-Centaurs. By this time I was earning about \$30000 a year and by retirement nineteen years late inflation had booted it up to about \$80000.



After about five years, NASA awarded the Shuttle processing contract to Lockheed and I decided to stay with Rockwell which reduced their force from 5000 to about 200. I was a System Specialist (kind of a Maytag Repairman) advising on the Main Propulsion System until I retired in 1997. I've been well paid and well rewarded with two President's Awards, the NASA HQ Manned Flight Safety Award for averting a potential disaster, and other peachy keen awards. I worked too long hours and missed out on a lot of the kids' growing up. The Challenger disaster is my personal work low point and diminished the glamour of the job for me. Thank God it wasn't my system that failed. I've rubbed elbows with astronauts John Young, Crippen and the others. Guess it beats digging ditches. Dean met John Young in a Ready Room and they discussed me. Neat.

See [or Appendix 5](#) for my feelings after the Challenger disaster.

I've recorded several "Space memories" at [Appendix 6](#)

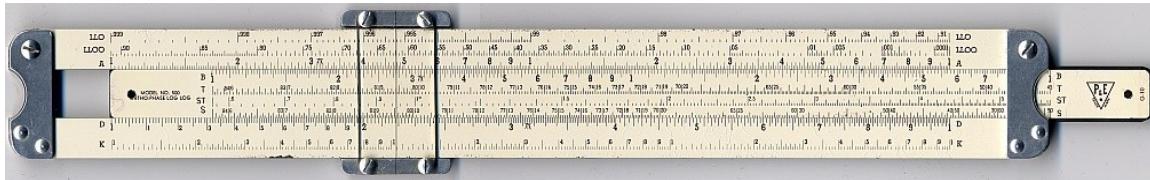
Here's a story of how I was awarded a very high NASA Award for detecting and repairing a potential disaster.. See [or Appendix 7.](#)

This is a good place to mention computers. It was not until 1985 several years into the Space Shuttle that we got our first Macintosh (Apple) desktop computers at work. It had

128 kilobytes of storage and all input was done using 3" discs.



I was forty-four years old then. Up to that time all work was done handwritten with pen and paper. NASA had big main frame computers to control operations during the Apollo program. Handheld electronic calculators didn't arrive until around 1967 and my first one could just add, subtract, multiply and divide and cost \$400. In college and during Apollo all calculations were done using a slide rule and mechanical drawings were done by hand by skilled draftsmen.



The Space Shuttle program was the first NASA program to use a computerized firing room. We test engineers hand wrote all of the programs to control our test and launch consoles on big green "IBM" sheets and then keypunch operators would transform those sheets into punch cards that would feed the computers and eventually end up on giant tape reels in the firing room.



Space Shuttle Firing Room

Over the next thirty years computer technology increased tremendously through desktop computers, laptops and tablets with storage up in the gigabytes.



My current desktop Apple.

When I was young telephones looked like this.



In fact the ones just before this had no dial and when you picked up the receiver a human operator would ask "number please" and would manually connect the call. It wasn't uncommon to see these hanging on the wall in corner markets.



Push button phones came about in the 1960s and wireless phones in the 1970s. Cell phones became popular around 1990. Here's 2017 iPhone.



**In 1964 we bought our home at 947 Barbara Lane in Rockledge, FL** for \$16400 with air conditioning. We added a garage, a "new room", a screen porch, a shed and a swimming pool. Have lived there to the present through two kids, three grandkids, three dogs innumerable cats, numerous appliances and A/C units, and about five hurricanes.



Cars, we've had too many to count from around \$1600 in 1963 up to \$43000. Inflation! My favorite was my 1984 Nissan 300Z sports car that I end up sinking in a KSC canal in heavy fog. Yvonne's favorite was our '65 Mustang, white with baby blue interior.



Here's our most modern car in 2017. It is a 2013 Infiniti G37. The two of us also own a 1998 Lexus and a 2007 Ford Edge.



In our senior years we started skiing at fifty and did that all over the West and Canada for fifteen years.



And I returned to tennis at sixty-two and am still doing well in old man leagues.



For our 50th Wedding Anniversary story see [Appendix 8](#)

I also have another bio on my Naval Academy class page at <http://www.usna63.org/classmates/roster/cur-bio/315270.html>. or [Appendix16](#)

**Here's a story about watching Dean flying off the USS Carl Vinson in 1994. See [Appendix 14](#)**



In the air on 9-11, September 11, 2001. See [Appendix 15](#).

## Appendices

### Appendix 1

## Tales from the Natatorium Stephen Coester



It seems like plebe year we spent an awful lot of time in the Natatorium. Early in plebe summer there was the sorting out of the

swimmers versus the non-swimmers. I remember Coach Higgins

teaching us the basic breaststroke. I also remember a big pot belly

hanging over his Speedo but I just found out this info about him

John Herbert Higgins (May 8, 1916 – August 1, 2004) was an American competition [swimmer](#) and swimming coach. He competed

during the transition time, when [breaststroke](#) swimmers were allowed

to combine and swimming the [butterfly](#) arm stroke with the usual frog

kick. Using this technique, he finished fourth at the [1936 Summer](#)

[Olympics](#) in the 200 m, and set two world records in the 100 m

breaststroke event in 1935 and 1936. During the Olympic trials, he

set a national record in the 200 m breaststroke that was unbeaten

until 1948. During his career, Higgins won 11 national titles

and set  
10 world records in breaststroke and medley events. In  
1971, he was  
inducted to the [International Swimming Hall of Fame](#).  
Also it seemed that our swimming days were always when  
the  
weather was frightful. Wearing our reef coats, carrying  
poncho and  
an armful of books we'd trudge to McDonough Hall and the  
Natatorium where it never felt much warmer than outside.  
Remember floating in our khakies and trying to make floats  
out of the  
pants.  
But the two things I really remember about the Natatorium  
are the  
tower jump and the forty minute swim. I had swum since I  
was a little  
tyke and was a lifeguard during high school so the water  
didn't phase  
me but I never cared much for heights. All through plebe  
summer I  
would stare up at that darn platform thirty feet up in the  
rafters and  
wonder if I would make the jump. Now consider classmates  
who  
feared both water and heights. It had to be a terrifying  
proposition.  
Well finally the day came for us to climb the rope ladder up  
to the  
tower and make the leap using approved abandon ship  
technique or  
else be assigned to the dreaded sub-squad with the promise  
of  
having to climb to the tower every day until finally able to  
jump. Our  
squad jumped into the pool and swam over to the rope  
ladder and  
one by one started climbing the swaying rope. I remember  
Cole

Lindell reaching the top and doing a flip off the tower into the pool. I followed not even liking climbing the ladder until I reached the tower and cautiously toed my way to the edge. At this point for the first time in my life I discovered the power of peer pressure. There was no way I was going to let my fellow mids see how terrified I was and I stepped off the tower and one second late hit the water. Never again was I afraid of heights. It went that way for most, but a few just couldn't handle it and wouldn't jump. They had to climb back down the treacherous ladder and alas be put on the sub-squad. I really felt for them for it could have been me.

The other experience I remember was the forty minute swim where we had to swim some required number of laps around the pool and never touch the sides or else we were disqualified and, bingo-off to the sub-squad. I don't remember if we were in clothes or swimming suits. As I said I was a decent swimmer so I was charging around the pool intent on getting a 4.0. Suddenly I felt a firm hand on my head, which pushed me under the water. I thought; another bored swimmer who wanted to mess around. So I reached up and grabbed his leg and pulled him under. Oh no! The hand that submerged me belonged not to a strong swimmer but to one of those barely able to float who was floundering along trying to make at least the

minimum number of laps. He choked and gasped and flailed over to the side of the pool where he was immediately disqualified. For fifty-five years I've felt terrible about that incident. My final Natatorium memory is from I think first class year. If we could swim four hundred yards in some specified time we could validate the whole course of instruction. This should have been a piece of cake for me, but I had never swum for time. I started out like I was in a race and by about three hundred yards I had exhausted myself and sheepishly dropped out, meaning I had to go to every darn lesson. I counted that as a personal failure. I'm sure others have memories from their time in the pool, but these are mine.

Steve C. '63

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## Appendix 2

### Class of '63 - The Beginning- -From Steve Coester

Well, it's the Fortieth Anniversary of our entry to the World Famous USNA Class of 1963. We should all remember July 7, 1959 as being one of the most significant in our lives because it marked the start of our change from boys to men and gave us opportunities that have marked our lives forever. As I got to thinking about that day, I thought it would be fun to share what I remember of my feelings of that first day. And I'd love to hear your remembrances.

Forty years ago this week! I left my summer job as a lifeguard at Treecourt Pool. This was a milestone in my

young life. I had worked for four years at the pool doing everything from basket boy, to short order cook, to grass cutter , and finally, the world's best job, lifeguard. That filled the period between childhood and young man. I had been notified only a month previously that I had been accepted at the Naval Academy under Public Law 186 for qualified alternates. I had

given up on making it because I was only second alternate, behind **Ron Schowalter** and **Mike Bracy**, both of whom graduated in the Class of 63 with some measure of distinction. When I received that telegram from Western Union, it was definitely the most outstanding moment of my life

to that time. I had planned my life since the sixth grade with the intention of attending USNA after reading an article about it in the World Book Encyclopedia and now I'd have my chance. I hadn't made any alternate plans for college, so who knows what would have happened to me if that telegram hadn't arrived.

On July 6, 1959, just one week before my eighteenth birthday, I kissed my mom goodby and solemnly shook my dad's hand and went to board the TWA Lockheed Constellation at St. Louis's Lambert Field. That three tailed, fish shaped airplane in gleaming red and white seemed like the biggest grandest airplane that could ever be built. I had flown a lot in Piper Cubs and Cessnas because my dad worked at Lambert Field, but this was to be my very first flight in an airliner. I don't remember being nervous even though I had no idea when I'd ever see home again, and certainly had no idea what the next days, months and years had in store. I expected that every other new Mid would be six foot three, number one in his high school class, quarterback on the football team, and president of the student council. Here I was five foot eight, "only" a top ten percenter academically, and just third man on the

school tennis team. I didn't think I would be a shining star at USNA but I was happy just to be going.

After landing at National Airport in D.C., things are kind of a

blur. There I was with a heavy new leather suitcase, received a month earlier as a graduation present from Kirkwood High School. I lugged it around and must have stashed it somewhere for I decided to see a few sights. I climbed the steps five hundred feet up the Washington Monument just because I was seventeen and could. Then I went to the

Smithsonian and looked at the Hope diamond. I gawked at the Mall and the White House. This was big stuff for a kid from the St. Louis suburbs who had seldom been out of Missouri.

I think I sacked out in the bus station overnight so I would be sure to get the first bus to Annapolis on July 7. I certainly wasn't going to be late in reporting. I doubt that I had ten dollars in my pocket. I remember getting off the bus at the Annapolis station expecting to see the buildings and monuments of the Academy. Instead I saw nothing to tell me where to go and no flag waving welcoming committee. After asking around, I got directions and lugged that darn suitcase the several blocks to the Academy gate. The irony was that the next day we were all told to pack up all of our civilian gear and ship it and the suitcase back home.

That first day was a blur of getting uniforms, haircuts, learning (unsuccessfully) how to stencil our names onto our blouses and trying to shape those silly sailor hats into something that looked a bit more swashbuckling. That first day my roommate had his windup alarm clock stolen. I was shocked because I had studied up and knew about the Honor Concept. I guess some had to learn honor as they went along. We learned that we would receive the magnificent sum of five dollars a month in cash money. It never occurred to me to write home for more. The

Plebe Detail, those Second Classmen, looked like young gods; so self assured, confident and omnipotent. How they managed to never break a sweat I still don't understand. It was impossible to realize they were only two years removed from us uncoordinated slobs. I was arbitrarily roomed with **Ron Machens** that Plebe Summer and was fortunate that we ended up in the same academic year company and roomed together for most of the next four years. Ron helped me immensely academically and psychologically to make it through the plebe and succeeding years. Despite my humble start and beyond my understanding I ended up wearing "stars", being on the Sup's List, and lettering in Tennis. I was a three striper until the infamous Christmas Leave Party, but that's another story that gets better every year. They even made me a Rhode's Scholarship candidate, but the Rhodes committee made up exclusively of left wing communist pinkos (of course), didn't choose any of Navy's candidates, not even our number one man, **Dan Hennessy**.

Plebe summer was **HOT!** By the time we put on our uniforms they were drenched. But we slowly learned our rates, and how to march and run and swim and shoot. We learned to spit shine our shoes and watched them crack at that first step. We brushed and brushed blue wool and still the lint glistened all over. We ate square meals, turned square corners, saluted and barked, "Yes Sir" thousands of times. And we did come arounds and braced up and sweated pennies to the wall until we were ready to drop. And, damned, if I didn't love every darn minute of it! We watched new friends pack up and go home victims of psychological or physical stress or academic rigors for which they just weren't prepared. Those of us that remained became a part of something that transcended ourselves. We became part of a tradition that started in 1845, members of the Brigade of Midshipmen, and

brothers in the Class of 1963, incidentally the LAST class to have a REAL Plebe Year.

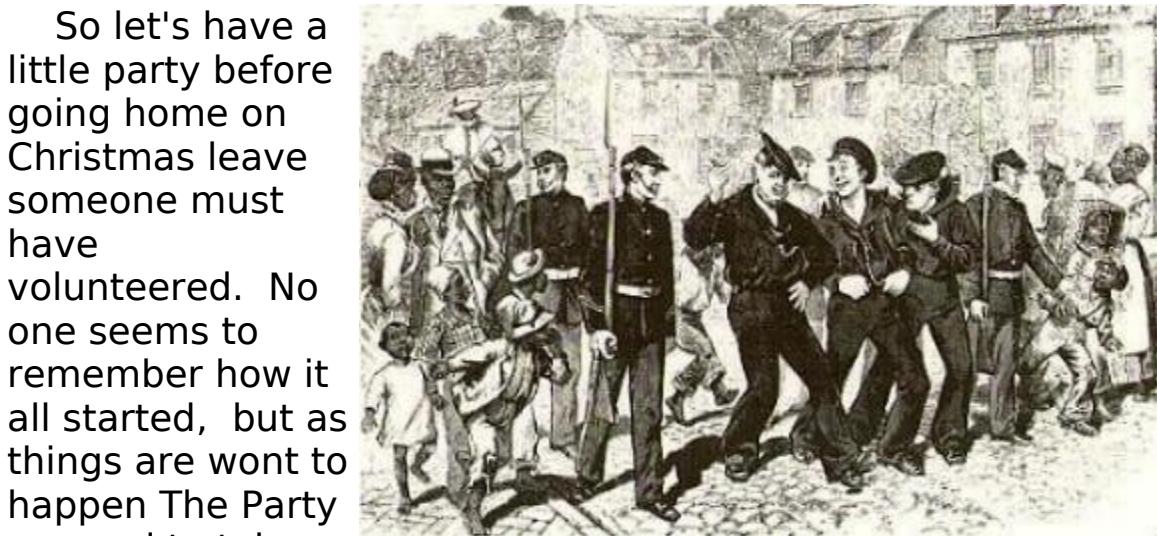
It remains an honor to be one of YOU.

- Steve Coester

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## Appendix 3

### The 18th Company Pre Christmas Leave Party A Sordid Tale of Misused Youth



So let's have a little party before going home on Christmas leave someone must have volunteered. No one seems to remember how it all started, but as things are wont to happen The Party seemed to take on a life of its own. It was just before Christmas Leave of our Firsty year. We had whipped Army for the fourth year in a row and things were looking pretty good in Mother B. The 18th Company had a reputation for being one of the best damn companies in the Brigade, the Class of 1963 was held in high esteem, and we were just about finished with our last really tough academic semester. We deserved to kick loose and have a fling.

The details are fuzzy, but somehow it was mutually decided that the festivities should be held in the room of Ron Machens, Tak Takabayashi, and Steve Coester. Theirs was the big room at the end of the corridor that spanned two normal rooms plus the width of the passageway. Made sense to the occupants. That settled, it was determined that if there was going to be a party there had to be some booze. Somehow the fact that getting caught would be a Class A offense didn't make much of an impression. Also at that

time it was against Maryland state law to sell alcohol to midshipmen so this called for ingenuity. It didn't prove too difficult to find a wino who would make the necessary purchases. One of the main shoppers eventually rose to Flag rank and another became Company Commander after he escaped the eventual consequences. Now with contraband in hand where could it be stored until party day? In the confidential lockers of course, in there with all those papers with the pretty little red security stamps all over them. I suppose that violated a regulation or two also.

Finally the evening before Christmas Leave 1962 arrived and it was party time! Almost every firsty in the 18th crowded into the room with their individual bottles of forbidden liquor. The stereo was turned up full blast and the party began and the bottles started to drain. Even though it was December, the room started getting pretty warm so the windows were flung open. This went on long after taps and everyone who still had any rational thoughts was feeling pretty smug about how we had put a big one over on all the petty regs.

Suddenly the door was flung open and it wasn't Santa and his reindeer. Standing there was the OOD (a jar head) and his mate. Apparently he had heard the festivities all the way down on the road between Dahlgren Hall and Bancroft and decided to see what was up. Time stood still for a microscopic eternity. Then the OOD's face crumbled like why the hell did he have to find this, what had he done to deserve this situation. Someone croaked, "Attention on deck!". The music continued to blare and the room exploded. Some snapped to as rigid a version of braced up as they could manage in their advanced state of pre holiday cheer. Several dove out of the open windows. Seeing that we were on the sixth deck this seemed pretty hazardous and absolutely humorous at the same time. Remember the three foot wide stone and copper gutters that ran around the top of Bancroft Hall ? They were just below the window level and offered a quick, if perilous, route between rooms. Seeing several friends appearing to fly out of the window had a nervous effect on Steve who began to giggle which

caused several other miscreants to also start to laugh while trying to hold a brace. Captain Whoever failed to see the humor at all.

Ollie Donelon had stepped out for ice . He rounded the corner to come back to the room and all he saw was the back of the OOD! He never got caught. I guess good things sometimes happen to really rotten people. Needless to say he did not volunteer to join the club!

Tom Reemelin remembers that his intentions were to not imbibe because of prior indiscretions, but the spirit of the season and the terrific sing-along caught him up in the festivities!. Tom was one of the flyers but as he tried to climb out of the window to hide on the ledge outside ( 6 stories up!) he couldn't quite get his slightly inebriated butt out the window in time and was ordered to rejoin the party.

Chooch Machens hid in a closet and you should have seen the grin on his face when the mate (or OOD) opened it up and invited him to step back into the room.

Tak dove behind a bunk but was observed and ordered back where he could be seen. Tak, Tom, and Steve apparently looked a little worse for wear , and Tom had his usual rosy cheeked complexion so they were escorted to sick bay apparently for sobriety checks. Many push ups were done trying to get rid of any traces of alcohol, however nothing happened there and eventually they were sent back topside.

As remembered there were several who escaped, but thirteen were suddenly in BIG TROUBLE. We were herded (marched would be an insult to military discipline) down to the Rotunda and OOD's office where Form 2's were diligently prepared charging everyone with all sorts of unofficer like conduct. We were finally dismissed early the next morning with the advice to call Mommy and Daddy and let them know we wouldn't be coming home for Christmas.

Check this out to see how Dave Durfee and Art Clark missed the festivities and became Company Stripers.

Mike Cronin sent in the straight poop on how he became the 18th Company Commander. (Click here), Mike Cronin was actually studying, possibly for the first time ever,

and was late for the Party.■

Christmas Leave morning all those charged were sitting around in their skivvies watching everyone else, even the plebes, packing their B-4 bags and cheerfully getting ready to head out. It was starting to sink in that this lark could actually result in dismissal! After start of leave was announced, another PA announcement said very somberly, "All midshipmen on Class A pending may go on Christmas Leave. Report to the OOD's office upon return." Obviously someone finally figured out that the whole infrastructure would have to be maintained if they kept us around.■

After leave those caught at the party were judged guilty and awarded ninety demerits and three months of restriction. Also everyone was interviewed by the Commandant and a letter of reprimand placed in their midshipman file. I think all the restrictees were thankful for the leniency. I remember that some of those on restriction later climbed out the windows of the unfinished 8th Wing and took "liberty" in D.C. anyway. But that's another story.■

There were a lot of stripes lost that night, including two three stripers, and many found out that their Class standing dropped several points based on "aptitude for Naval service". On the positive side, those who either didn't attend the party or who escaped had their standings improved and got those vacated stripes. Restriction probably improved some grades on the first semester finals and a few learned a lesson or two.

Compiled by Steve Coester with help from Pete Quinton, Dave Durfee, Tom Reemelin, Mike Cronin and Ollie Donelan

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## Appendix 4

# Launching Apollo 11 to the Moon Stephen Coester



In 1969 I was a 28 year old engineer, one of several responsible for fueling the giant Saturn V rocket with Liquid Hydrogen. My favorite Apollo memory was performing my final walkdown of the LUT just before launching Apollo 11. We were so aware of the enormity of what we were about to do. The MSS (mobile service) had been rolled back revealing the enormous Saturn V to full view. It was after dark and the spotlights were casting their cones of illumination on the stack. I was virtually alone on the tower as I

examined every component of the LH2 system to be as sure as I

could that "my" system would do its job. It was just me and the Saturn

V with a bright moon overhead. I would look at the moon , then at the rocket and think, " I don't want to be anywhere but right where I am right now"

Long forgotten is the fact that the Apollo 11 launch was almost

scrubbed on July 16. I was assigned to the launch console (C4HU)

that maintained 100% liquid hydrogen level in the Saturn third stage

which was used to propel the astronauts from earth orbit to the moon.

Late in the propellant loading as we were beginning the S-IVB

replenish operation, a large liquid hydrogen leak at -423 degrees

occurred on the third stage replenish valve on the 200 foot level of the

launch umbilical tower. Loading was terminated and the lines drained

to prevent a fire or explosion and a Red Crew went to the Pad to fix

the problem.

Using troubleshooting that I developed the Red Crew torqued packing

and flange bolts and cycled the valve. then we resumed liquid

hydrogen flow, but were unsuccessful in stopping the leak which

prevented maintaining the 100% fuel level in the Saturn third stage.

Without a full tank of liquid hydrogen there would be no launch.

Finally the leak was isolated by freezing the valve by pouring

water over it, but that made the critical valve inoperable. We then developed a way to use the large main fill valve which was not intended for that purpose to maintain the level and the launch countdown could finally continue. For several hours another engineer (CPH1) manually cycled the valve from his console as I reported the tank level as it fell below or exceeded 100%. See the PCR (procedure change request) that I wrote. For the actual voice transcripts by Public Affairs during this problem see <http://history.nasa.gov/ap11fj/01launch.htm>. If we hadn't controlled the leak and maintained proper LH<sub>2</sub> level the moon launch would have been scrubbed for at least July 16 and probably for several days. I was twenty-eight years old when we landed on the moon, responsible for loading 600000 gallons of LH<sub>2</sub> on the "moon rocket". The managers were in their early thirties and someone over forty was "the old man". Exciting times!

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## Appendix 5

# Space Shuttle Challenger Disaster A Personal Perspective Stephen Coester



Some events are indelibly inscribed in our consciousness such as Pearl Harbor, 9-11-2001 and the Challenger Disaster on January 28, 1986. Here is my personal recollection of Challenger. By the time we were ready to launch our second Space Shuttle Oribiter, Challenger on its tenth mission the Kennedy Space Center launch team has successfully launched twenty-four Space Shuttles including a Columbia mission just two weeks earlier carrying U.S. Representative Bill Nelson from our home district. The only major

flaw in any of those missions had been July 29, 1985 occurring on Challenger when a faulty sensor caused a main engine (SSME) early shutdown and a abort to orbit on two engines, but all mission objectives were achieved.

The launch team and all of NASA were confident and launching had become fairy routine. I had participated in all the pre-launch processing and the Challenger was ready for flight. For the first several Space Shuttle flights I had been the Supervisor of Main Propulsion Engineering (MPS), but after a contract change I was now a MPS System Specialist, an advisor to the new prime contractor.

Up to this time I had supported every mission for twenty-one years in the blockhouse or firing room and eventually supported one hundred and fifteen launches including Apollo, Atlas-Centaur and Space Shuttle. But on this particular Challenger mission another System Specialist and I agreed that only one of us needed to support the launch and we would alternate missions. He drew Challenger. So for every launch over thirty-three years that I was involved in this was the only one I didn't directly support on a launch console. As the countdown progressed I was instead standing out in the Launch Control Center parking lot with all the other employees looking forward to actually seeing a launch in person and not on a small black and white TV screen at my console.

I was very nervous because the outside temperature was below freezing. I had earlier experience with equipment problems in cold weather back in the Apollo days which caused line ruptures and a pressure related explosion in my GSE which caused some damage on the ground. The previous night's low temperature was an unheard of eighteen degrees and icicles were hanging from the launch tower.

I kept trying to come up with a good reason to approach management but analyzing the MPS and engine systems couldn't come up with a cold related problem. After all, these systems operated in a range from -423 degrees to 3000 degrees so a little cold shouldn't affect them. I presumed all the other systems and contractors were doing the same thing.

The launch occurred without incident and at T+73 seconds right at the "Go for Power Up" call the explosion occurred. I saw the big cloud and solid rockets fly off wildly and immediately knew something had gone terribly wrong. I raced the few yards into the control room and asked my vice president what I should do. He told me to go home, come in early the next day because we'd have lots of work to do. The firing room was locked down and everything was sealed. For several weeks I poured over all of the thousands of pieces of

flight data from the MPS system. Every instrument was totally normal until suddenly data just stopped at T+73 seconds like it had been cut by a knife. So a review of MPS and SSME data didn't provide any answers. Considering all of the onboard systems, the MPS and SSMEs had to be a prime suspect for any explosion like this. Barges, submarines and surface ships combed the seabed and recovered most of the Challenger pieces. These were laid out in a big tent. I had to walk through all this wreckage and examine each broken piece of my system to try to find a cause of the explosion. It was very emotional. The SSME power heads looked fine although everything was bent up. No obvious culprits were found in my systems.

I considered the most likely part of the MPS system that would cause an accident of this kind were the two seventeen inch disconnects between the external tank and the orbiter. Inadvertent closure of either valve in a 17-inch disconnect during space shuttle main engine thrusting would stop propellant flow from the external tank to all three main engines. Catastrophic failure of the main engines and external tank feed lines would result.

There had been test failures and we had performed modifications on the valves to prevent them from slamming closed during 25000 gpm

flow of LH2 and LO2 to the engines. Finally both disconnect plates

were retrieved from the ocean and thankfully for me both were still

locked in their open position. This eliminated them as a cause of the disaster.

Finally a sharp eyed engineer who was reviewing the launch camera

films discovered a puff of smoke from one of the solid rocket segments and then flame from that joint. The cause had been found.

The SRB leak occurred in exactly the wrong place impinging on the

strut that held the external tank to the solid rocket and cutting through

it. This caused the SRB to swing away from the external tank at the

bottom and crush it at the top causing the explosion.

Finally the cause had been found and in my sorrow I could at least be

thankful it wasn't my system that had caused the accident.

Quickly it

was determined that the cold weather had hardened an o-ring in one

of the solid rocket joints. It didn't seal and the leak occurred.

I stayed in my position as MPS system Specialist for another eleven

years and the day to day test and operations work was fine, but the

last few minutes before launch was misery for me and I was extremely nervous at liftoff. Never after the Challenger disaster did I

enjoy those last few minutes leading to lift off. It wasn't until years

later that I understood how profoundly the Challenger accident had

affected my psyche.

I've recently visited the KSC Visitor Center and each time I

gazed at the SRB my first thoughts are about the accident. I would bet that virtually every other KSC employee has the same feeling.

[Return to main text](#)

## Appendix 6

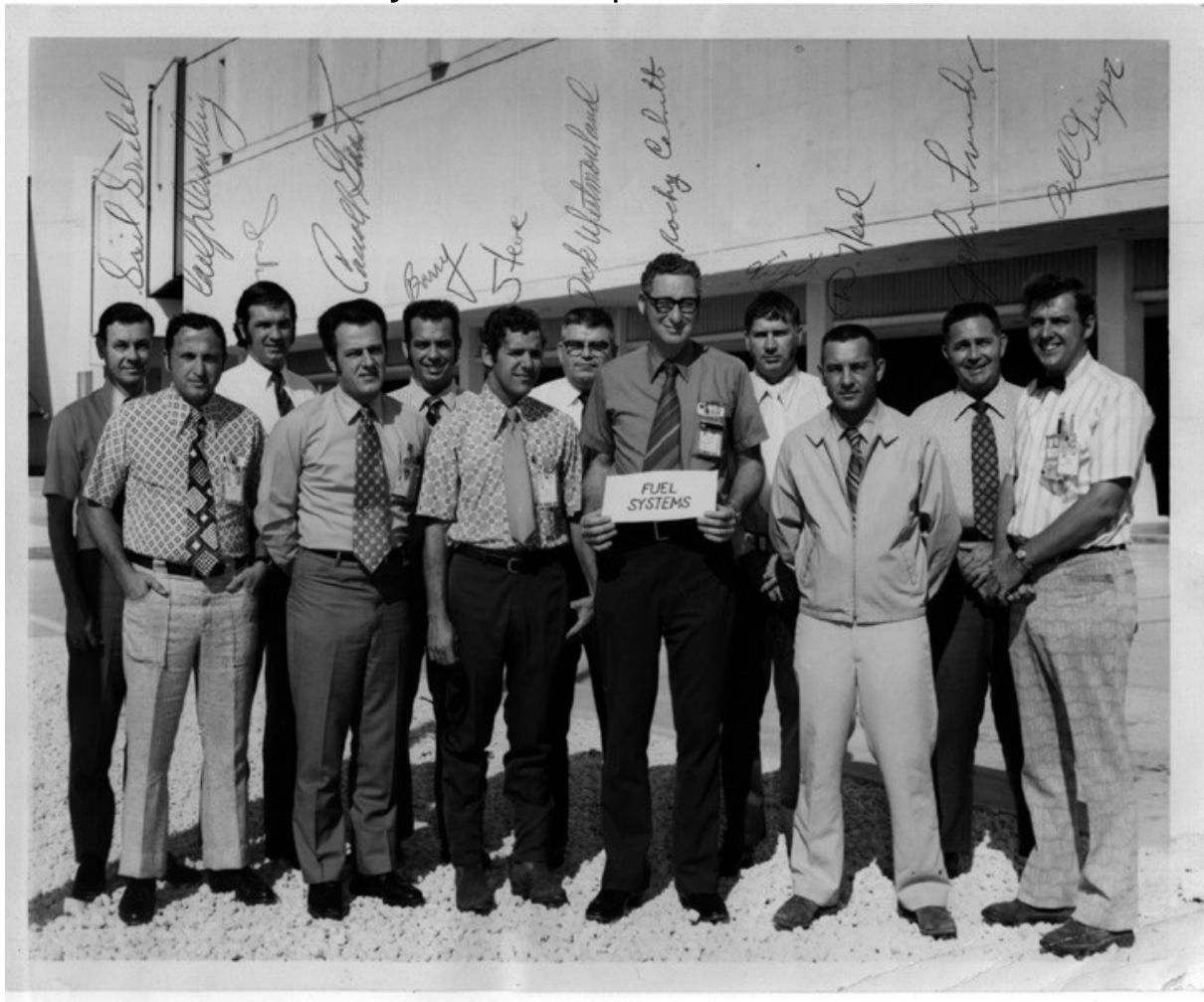
### Memories of Space Stephen H. Coester

In 1964, I was medically separated from the Navy in California at age 23 with a wife and a newborn child. My parents were then living in Hollywood, Fl so we headed East to see them and figure out what a Naval Academy grad was going to do with the rest of his life. After searching the Miami want ads I chanced upon an ad from Boeing looking for engineers on the Apollo program at KSC. I interviewed and was hired by Boeing by John Redmond into the Systems Engineering department in November of 1964. I was about the four hundredth person hired by Boeing (led by Wendall Clark) which would eventually grow to several thousand.

#### 1964-1973

Shortly after hiring in I was assigned to the team preparing Boeing's response to the Apollo/Saturn RFP and acted as coordinator along with Charlie Friend to compile the inputs of all of the many engineering disciplines into a proposal. Based on my performance in that task, Mitch Hart requested me to be his Administrative Assistant while setting up and hiring personnel for the Procedures and Specifications and Requirements group. During the buildup this was exciting but I became bored and wanted to become part of the hands on Launch Team. I requested a transfer to the Test Engineering group under Howard (Hardy Hardcastle) and reported to the Liquid Hydrogen group on Pad 39A under Rocky Calvetto. The Lead engineers were Stu Woodward and Wes Westmoreland. Gail Griebel patiently taught me the intricities of the LH<sub>2</sub> System. Jack Kramer was my cohort in

getting every job done right. About that time they were conducting cold flow tests to validate the LH2 transfer system and preparing for the first Tanking test of the non flight Facilities Integration Vehicle, SA-500F. I was assigned to monitor the S-IVB tanking as C4HU in Firing Room One and supported the rest of The Saturn V launches from one console or another. On SA-508 I controlled the LH2 tanking as CCLH. Incidentally this was Apollo 13.



We often referred to the Liquid Hydrogen system as a big vacuum system that incidentally transferred hydrogen. I became expert in operating vacuum pumps and performing mass spectrometer leak checks of the vacuum jacketed piping. There were about forty vacuum sections each on LC39 A & B; and over twenty on each of the three LUTS (Umbilical Towers). Of course we also had to offload

countless trailers of LH2 into the 800000 gallon storage dewer, perform component, subsystem and system level tests. The burn pond where vented hydrogen gas was disposed of was a continuous challenge with approximately 1500 individually adjusted bubble caps to maintain the proper vent pressures. We also prepared all of the system level test procedures and worked with the Test Conductors on the Launch Countdown and Tanking procedures. Also there were endless modifications and problems to resolve.

My favorite Apollo memory was performing my final walkdown of the LUT just before launching Apollo 11. We were so aware of the enormity of what we were about to do. The MSS had been rolled back revealing the enormous Saturn V to full view. It was after dark and the spotlights were casting their cones of illumination on the stack. I was virtually alone on the tower as I examined every component of the LH2 system to be as sure as I could that "my" system would do its job. It was just me and the Saturn V with a bright moon overhead. I would look at the moon , then at the rocket and think, " I don't want to be anywhere but right where I am right now"

On the eve of the fortieth anniversary of Apollo 11 I was confused because of the above story as to whether I was on the prime Firing Room crew or was on the back up team for that historic launch. I wrote my fellow systems engineer Jack Kramer who wrote the following:

*"You were C4HU for Apollo 11. I was CPH1. You were in charge of the SIVB level while we bypassed the replenish valve because of the leaking valve. I have (at home) the Procedure change you wrote, ([click here](#)) so we could do it. (For the actual voice transcripts ([click here](#)).) Those were long days. You probably did the walkdown of the system then came to the firing room. It was always the best on night shift looking at that monster in the floodlights.*

*Wayne Gray and Red Davis, a safety guy and I were on the launcher while you detailed the plans for torquing the valve*

*bolts and leak checking the valve. When we warmed up the valve with the hard hat bucket brigade I came back to the firing room and you and I controlled the level by cycling the main fill valve using the slow fill mode. If we hadn't controlled the leak and maintained proper LH2 level the launch would have been scrubbed for the day."*

I was twenty-eight years old when we landed on the moon, responsible for loading 600000 gallons of LH2 on the "moon rocket". The managers were in their early thirties and someone over forty was "the old man". Exciting times!

Things were way different back then safeywise. Often I would climb outside of the handrails on the 240 foot level of the tower and shinny out on the vent line to inspect a pipe or expansion joint. Never gave a thought to a safety belt!

During one cold flow test I got permission to stand out at the burn pond to monitor the flame patterns during venting which caused a hundred foot square by hundred foot high conflagration. And once we had a leak on the twelve inch vent valve from the storage tank. At that time helium for inerting was a rare and expensive commodity and it was going to take months for the tank to warm up enough to inert it with nitrogen so we decided to remove the vent valve with a partially full tank. We all had on anti static clothes and leg stats and fans to blow the hydrogen away, but as soon as the flange was loosened we were enveloped in a cloud of hydrogen vapor. I was sure an explosion would ensue, but we had little choice but to complete the job. Somehow we survived.

After the Apollo program was prematurely canceled, I was assigned to modify Pad 39B to support the launch of the Saturn-IB from the milkstool for the Skylab program. What a clever idea that was! During that period I received my MBA from FSU. After supporting all of the S-IB launches to Skylab, as the workforce was being decimated, I volunteered for layoff when a job launching Atlas-Centaur became available at LC36.

While I'm in a story telling mood here's another Tale from the Rocket Wars. and apologies to Stew Woodward, my old lead engineer whose account I've freely plagiarized. For this story I was just an observer from my liquid hydrogen post in the Firing Room, but it's a good one. By the way Apollo 13 was lifted on Saturn 508 and for this flight I had been honored to operate the main LH<sub>2</sub> loading console directing the loading operation. Liquid oxygen which combined with either RP-1 (kerosene) or liquid hydrogen powers the Saturn V rocket was stored on the perimeter of the launch complex in a large 800,000 gallon insulated tank (as was liquid hydrogen on the other side of the Pad). It was transferred across the field and up the Umbilical Tower using huge centrifugal pumps. Because the main transfer line was uninsulated a long chill down operation had to be performed to cool the line and provide high quality LO<sub>2</sub> to the rocket. So hours before the loading of the Saturn V started, a small amount of LO<sub>2</sub> (about 25000 gallons!) was allowed to flow through the pumps, lines, and launch vehicle and out a drain into a ditch in the adjacent swamp. This was normally not a problem. The LO<sub>2</sub> vaporized and the wind blew it away. It quickly mixed in with O<sub>2</sub> already in the air. Apollo 13 was different. and we all know what happened later on its way to the moon. But this tale has nothing to do with that disaster.

We were doing a CDDT, Countdown Demonstration Test, a simulated countdown including fueling the rocket to show we could do it right on the Apollo 13 launch day. The day was overcast, not a breath of wind and the humidity and temperature were just right. On that day the pure oxygen draining into the ditch next to the road did not dissipate. It just sat in the ditch. You have all heard the stories of what happens in a hospital oxygen tent if you light a cigarette. In a 100% oxygen atmosphere it almost explodes it burns so fast.

The Security Police manned the guardhouse at the entrance to the launch pad. Just before we started loading the launch vehicle with fuel and oxidizer the pad was officially cleared, except for the police who did a final sweep of the Pad. They

would get in their patrol cars and drive around the pad perimeter road with red lights flashing and loud speakers blaring, "Clear the Pad." They would then report to the test conductor that the pad was officially clear for propellant loading and launch and exit the Pad through a gate near the LO2 facility. That day as we followed the patrol cars around the pad and out the gate on our console television monitors, they entered a fog bank where the dirt road was near the ditch. Normally this would have been condensed moisture from the humid air caused by the cold oxygen gas, but for Apollo 13 it evidently was pure oxygen. As the patrol cars drove though the cloud the hot grease on the engines caught fire. We saw the Security Police jump out and run to safety. A second car and then third followed and exploded in flame. No one knew what the heck was happening. We watched as the patrol cars burned with the oil, grease and gasoline acting as the fuel and the pure oxygen. The vehicles melted down to the engine blocks. Fortunately all of the patrolmen escaped. Once the excitement died down we resumed the simulated countdown. Never again did the

police use that Pad exit!



All of us who worked on the Launch Pad during Apollo took continuous safety courses in things like safety showers/eye washes, Scott Airpack breathing, safety harnesses, hazardous gases, pad egress, etc.

My favorite was always fire training. We would learn to use fire extinguishers on small fires and hoses on actual large oil fires.

I had done this course every year and while exciting was relatively safe. Well one year we were fighting fires and the day was extremely windy with about a 30 mph north wind. One drill was for five guys to follow a trail which had several small fires. The first and last had extinguishers and the center three were just along for the ride. Well, on this day the wind had whipped the flames to 20 feet high and I questioned the professionals whether it was safe. They said to quit being a chicken and go for it.

We entered the trail with me being the last guy all of us in coveralls, gloves, and breathing apparatus. The first guy attempted to knock down the first raging fire, but it flared right up. I hit it with my extinguisher to no effect. Suddenly we were surrounded by a wall of flame and all discipline was lost. We all bailed out through the wall of fire.

The fire fighters called us together to chew us out for our failure, but by this time I realized that all my exposed skin was feeling hot. I told them I needed to go to Medical and they said nonsense. I insisted and another engineer said he was also burned. At Medical they took it seriously and quickly applied ice water pads to our burns.

The other engineer was burned worse than me, but both of us lost all the skin on our necks, ears, wrists and anywhere not covered. The medical personnel said we were within seconds of being burned to death.

After the "smoke" cleared the Fire Chief in charge was fired and they toned down this safety course.

Life was sure exciting back then.

Yet another self disparaging Tale from the Space Wars.

This one involved what happened to me at a NASA Awards ceremony.









## Almost Headline: Space Scientist Speared By Safety Award

Well not quite, but what happened was that along with three others was the recipient of the NASA Manned Spaceflight Safety Award for our actions in an event that could have caused a Space Shuttle disaster. It's highly technical but perhaps I'll try to explain in another post. (later I did write this up. [Click Here](#) for that story.)

The event was held at the Cocoa Beach Radisson Resort and involved a reception and drinks for hundreds of NASA and contractor managers, astronauts and other dignitaries just so they could hand us our awards. At one point I met this attractive young lady in civilian clothes who I took to be about college age. Turns out it was Eileen Collins who was an astronaut and Air force colonel, who had not yet flown but who went on to become the first female Space Shuttle Commander!

Finally the big moment came and we recipients were lined up on a stage and handed our trophies by Fred Gregory, another astronaut who was now the NASA Deputy Administrator in Washington, D.C.

After the ceremony the stage became crowded with all the people wanting to shake our hands. Finally it was pretty much over and I turned around to leave the stage. I didn't realize that I was right on the edge and I tumbled the four feet to the concrete floor clutching the award. I smashed into the concrete and the sharp end of the award was fortunately between two of my fingers, not in my palm, and it slid between my ribs and my arm barely missing impaling me.

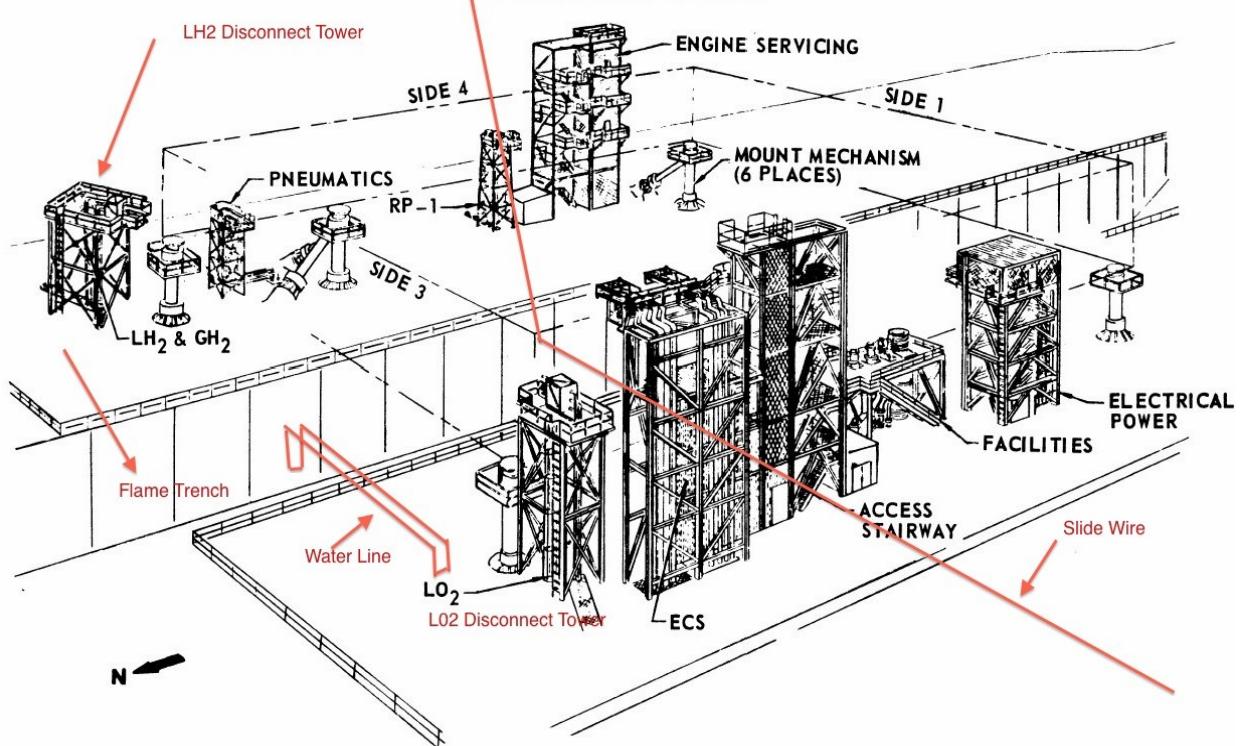
I was understandably pretty shook up but pretty much unhurt. Also I was quite embarrassed but as I painfully got to my feet not one of the hundreds of attendees had even noticed my fall. So I dusted myself off and limped around trying to act if nothing had happened. Why oh why does everything happen to me?

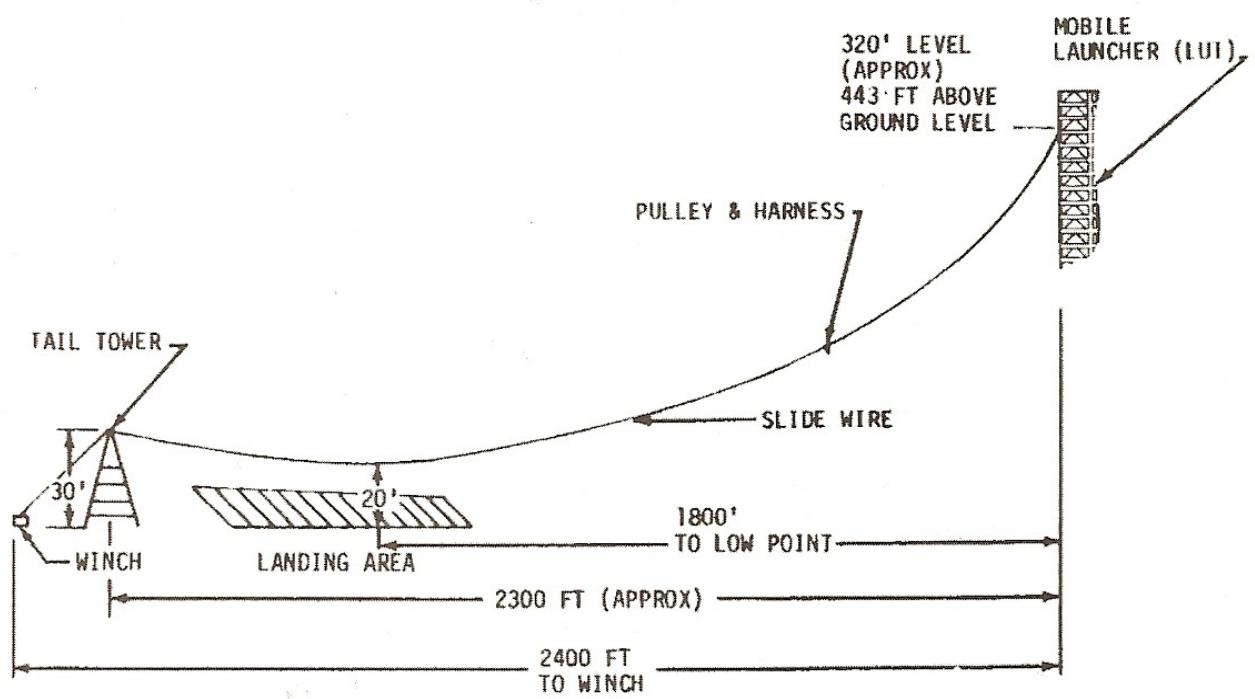
Tales from the Rocket Wars Sometimes I feel we should have received "Darwin Awards" instead of Performance Awards.

You get a twofer on this entry.

# GROUND CONNECTION AT PAD

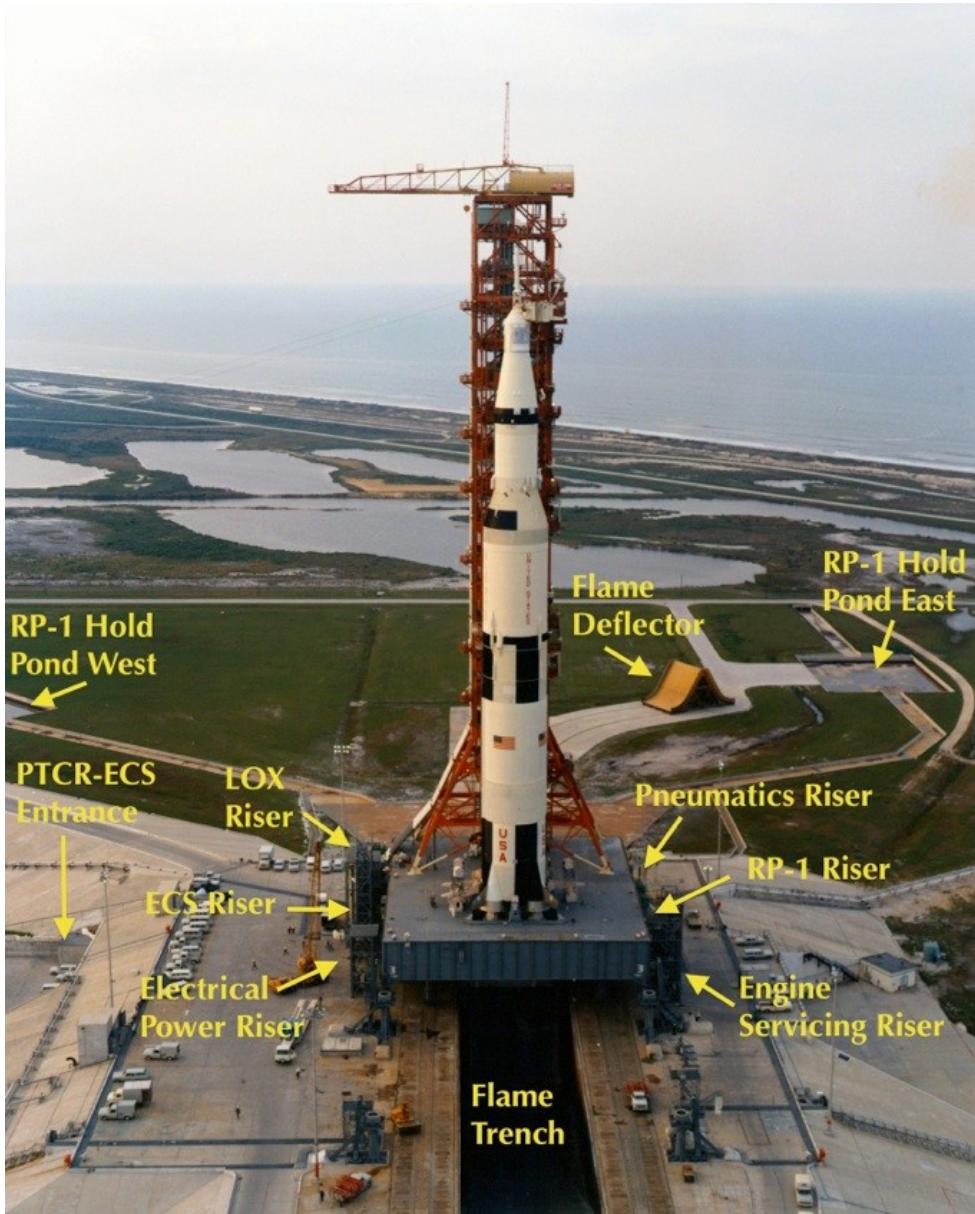
From 320 foot level of launch tower





EGRESS SYSTEM





The first I'll call Slidewire for Dummies.

During planning for Apollo astronaut safety a big rubber room was constructed under the pad. The idea was that in case of a fire or other emergency the astronauts would exit the capsule, ride the elevator down to inside the launch platform, slide down a teflon chute into the safe room and ride out whatever was happening above.

Soon they figured out that if the disaster was below them they probably would never make it to the room so they started designing a slide wire which would take them from the 320 foot level of the tower, just outside the capsule to 2300 feet away from the pad. Eventually they decided on a basket system where the astronauts would climb into the basket, hit a release and zoom down the wire. The same system was used for Space Shuttle but fortunately it never had to be used on either program.

One of the early designs was to have the astronauts wear a harness that would clip onto the wire. One day I was walking in the pad surface near the L02 Disconnect Tower (see sketch) and I heard a scream to take cover. They were testing the harness system with a life-sized dummy and it fell off the wire at 320 feet above the pad surface smashed into the L02 Disconnect tower, bounced off and landed pretty near me. so much for that idea.

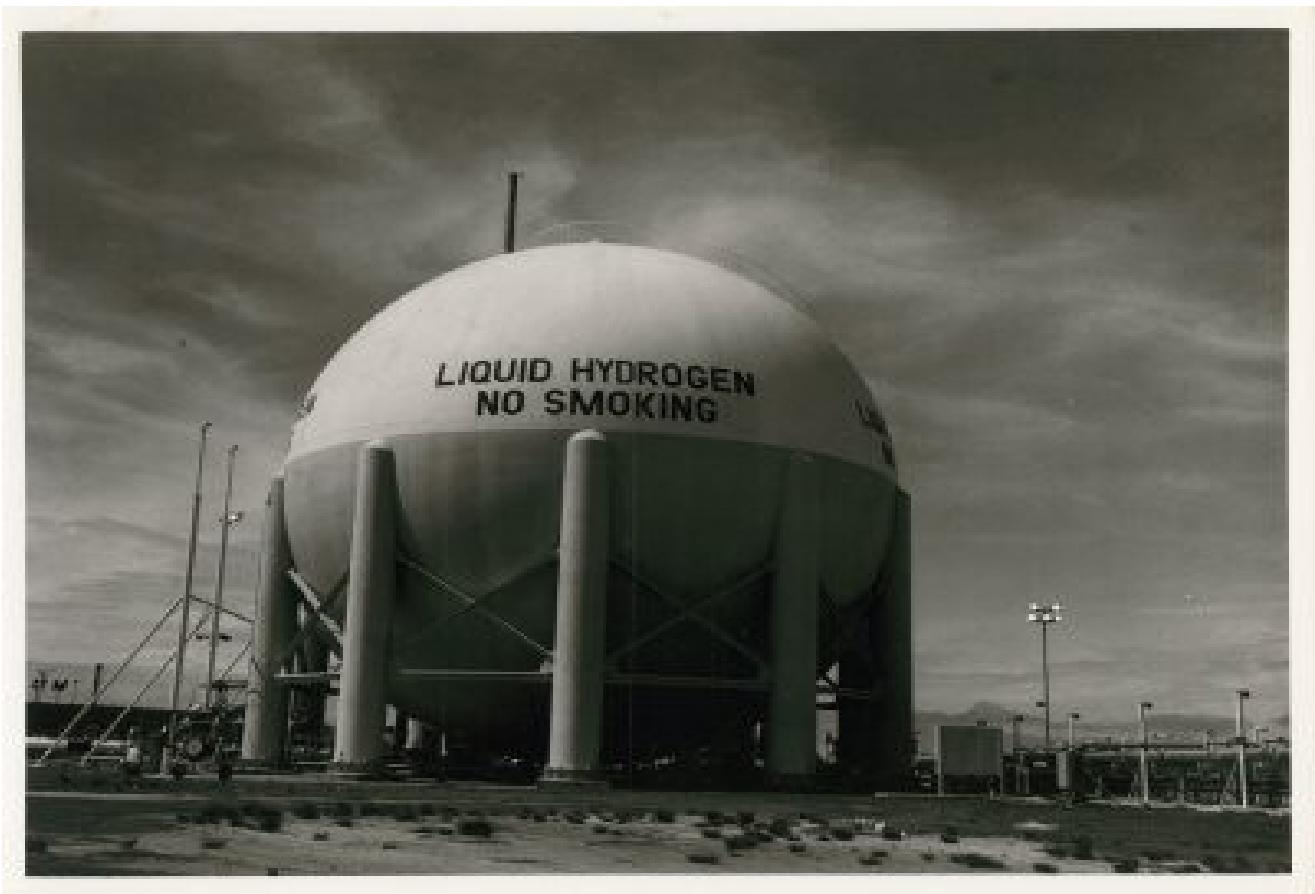
The second Tale is about a water test on the launch pad. Water for fire suppression and exhaust cooling was supplied to the pad through giant 36 inch pipes and at high pressure to reach all the way to the top of the Saturn rocket. One day I was performing some test on the LH2 Disconnect Tower and noticed tech configuring the water system. They connected a reducer to the 36 inch flange bringing it down to 12 inches. Then ran a pipe about forty feet from there over to the flame trench with an elbow pointing down into the trench (see sketch). Obviously they were going to do some kind of flow test of the water system.

They cleared the immediate area and hit the button to start flow. The tremendous pressure hit that 12 inch pipe like a rocket engine and ripped the whole forty feet of big pipe off of the 36 inch flange. Two things happen at once. First we now had a 36 inch column of water shooting hundreds of feet straight up. Secondly and more important to me standing just across the flame trench was that forty feet of pipe launching up a couple of hundred feet and slowly tumbling as it decided where to land. We had nowhere to go

since we were 30 feet up on our little tower so we just watched. Thankfully the pipe fell into the flame trench missing us and our tower.

During the apollo program a tech unbolted a 12 inch flange from the water system not knowing the system was pressurized. The flange broke the last few bolts, hit the man in the chest, killing him instantly. Everything was dangerous on the launch pad.

Another strange story from Tales of the Space Wars





When Launch Complex 39 was built the liquid hydrogen tank (See first photo) was painted per some federal spec with white on top and tan on the bottom and with simply "Liquid Hydrogen, No Smoking".

That worked just fine until OSHS (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) was created in 1970. One day we received a directive that our one of a kind hydrogen tank was not in compliance with OSHA regulations. The proper color was all white and the terminology had to be "Liquified Hydrogen, Flammable Gas" (second photo).

We thought this was pretty ridiculous as the tank is eighty feet in diameter and you can imagine how much paint that is and we kind of like the way it looked and the simplicity of the words. We hemmed and hawed and delayed but were finally threatened with fines (your money, not ours). I put in a work order to have the tank painted per the new design.

Obviously this was a massive job with painters in protective berating gear and big spray guns and it took several weeks.

Finally the tank was all white and they started painting the three foot tall lettering. first I questioned the spelling of "Liquified" since the preferred spelling is "Liquefied" but OSHA ruled.

Then one day I went out to see how it was coming along and there's this painter high on his scaffold merrily painting. He had completed "Liquified" and I notice the first three letters of the second word were "NIT", not "HYD". I yelled up to him to stop immediately and that his was a hydrogen tank, not a nitrogen tank. He reached into his coveralls and produced a piece of paper and said," I paint what's on my work order", and continued painting.

I was tempted to let him compile the whole word, "NITROGEN", but didn't and made a few phone calls. Eventually they got it right.

Bet you never heard that one!

Another tale from the Rocket Ranch. As shown in the photo above the 850000 gallon liquid hydrogen tank has a big pipe sticking out the top of it. LH<sub>2</sub> is liquid at -423 degrees and it continuously trying to turn to gas. That pipe is the vent to safely disburse the "boiloff". Hydrogen gas is extremely flammable and lightning or even static will ignite that venting gas making it look like a giant blowtorch. Early in the Apollo program we would get almost nightly calls from the test conductor saying our tank was on fire. We would call in a crew to come in and close the 12" vent valve and purge the pipe with gaseous nitrogen (GN<sub>2</sub>) until the fire was extinguished. After a year or two we figured the darn thing could safely burn until first shift came in to put it out. That leads into another tale. The last thing that the LH<sub>2</sub> team had to do before clearing the pad for launch was to open the big manual valve at the bottom of the tank that allowed flow up to the Saturn V, and to switch the venting gas from that top

pipe to the closed A3306 valve that let us pressurize the tank to 60 psi and pushed the LH2 up the tower and into the rocket. When A3306 was opened to vent the tank it created. 10000 square foot conflagration in the hydrogen burn pond for Apollo or burn stack for Shuttle. Very impressive to see. Anyway one night I was on that final preps crew and was waiting in our office trailer for the call to switch the valves. Early in the Apollo program they would tow all the trailers from the pad to prevent blast damage. Finally they determined more damage was being done removing them than letting them get blasted. Unknown to me the move crew had come in and moved the steps for the trailer about two feet out in preparation for the move. I got the call from the test conductor to perform our final preps and like I had done a thousand times opened the door and stepped out ...into nothing. As I fell the three feet to the ground my shins scrapped along the back of the steps ripping them to shreds. Then my elbows slammed into the top step. I was really in pain and bleeding from my legs, but I struggled up , rounded up my technicians and went out to finish our launch preparations. Then I cleaned myself up, cleared the launch pad and headed to the Firing Room to support the Saturn V launch on one of the hydrogen consoles.

The only moon launch from LC-39B: Cernan's Apollo 10 mission was launched on AS505 from LC-39B, the only mission to the moon launched from that pad. All others were from LC39A. Pad B was advertised as being identical to LC39A but during activation we found some significant differences. I was performing the initial fill of 850,000 gallons of super cold (-423 degrees F) highly flammable liquid hydrogen into the storage tank. This was done from numerous LH2 tanker trucks that held either 5000 gallons or 11,000 gallons. In the photo the fill manifold is shown in the foreground and we could offload five tankers at a time. We hooked up the five tankers, opened the valves, pressurized the tankers and started pushing liquid hydrogen into the giant storage tank. We had done this hundreds of times on Pad A so it was a hazardous but pretty routine operation. I

was leaning against the fill manifold controlling the operation when suddenly I heard a bang and saw the four inch diameter fill line bowing up out of its restraints like a writing snake. I immediately terminated fill and vented the tankers and watched as all the expansion bellow started cracking spewing clouds of vapor into the air. Everything looked identical to the same configuration we had used so long at the other pad so what had gone wrong. After safing the system I headed for the installation drawings. What I discovered was that unlike Pad A which used Inconel as the metal for the pressure carrier, the designers has switched to 316 stainless steel on pad B. But on both pads had used exactly the same expansion bellows. Inconel has extremely low contraction under cryogenic temperatures while stainless steel can shrink quite a lot. When the super cold hydrogen hit the stainless steel lines, the line contracted causing it to bend within its restraining supports and over stressing the bellows to the point the cracked and split. Quick reaction prevented a break of the pressure carrier line so no hydrogen was released. The system was down for several weeks while the bellows were replaced with much larger ones. After redesign and repair the tank was finally filled and thereafter successfully supported Apollo10/AS505, Skylab and Apollo- Souez and the Space Shuttle program.

## 1973-1978

I spent five wonderful years launching like the early space pioneers. General Dynamics had only about three hundred people on the whole program at CCAFS versus the tens of thousands on Apollo at KSC. There was no doubt who was responsible when something good or bad occurred on your system on Atlas-Centaur. I worked for Silas Baker and Clay Dennis with Dave Rogers as Lead Engineer. Hank Eskinsen was my mentor while learning the Centaur systems. I was the Centaur Pneumatics engineer and brought some valuable vacuum knowledge to the Centaur program. One of the prime purposes of performing a tanking test was to verify the integrity of the Centaur intermediate bulkhead which separated the oxygen and hydrogen tanks. Almost

inevitably the bulkhead would fail its vacuum check under the cryo condition resulting in a myriad of leak checks and another expensive tanking test. I suggested many changes to the Centaur bulkhead hardware and the ground vacuum monitoring equipment which after implementation resulted in never again failing the test. I participated in about thirty Atlas-Centaur launches. With the advent of the Space Shuttle it was announced that all unmanned launch vehicles would be discontinued so I went to KSC in search of some job security. As we know now some 23 years later they are still launching Atlas-Centaur as a result of the Challenger disaster.

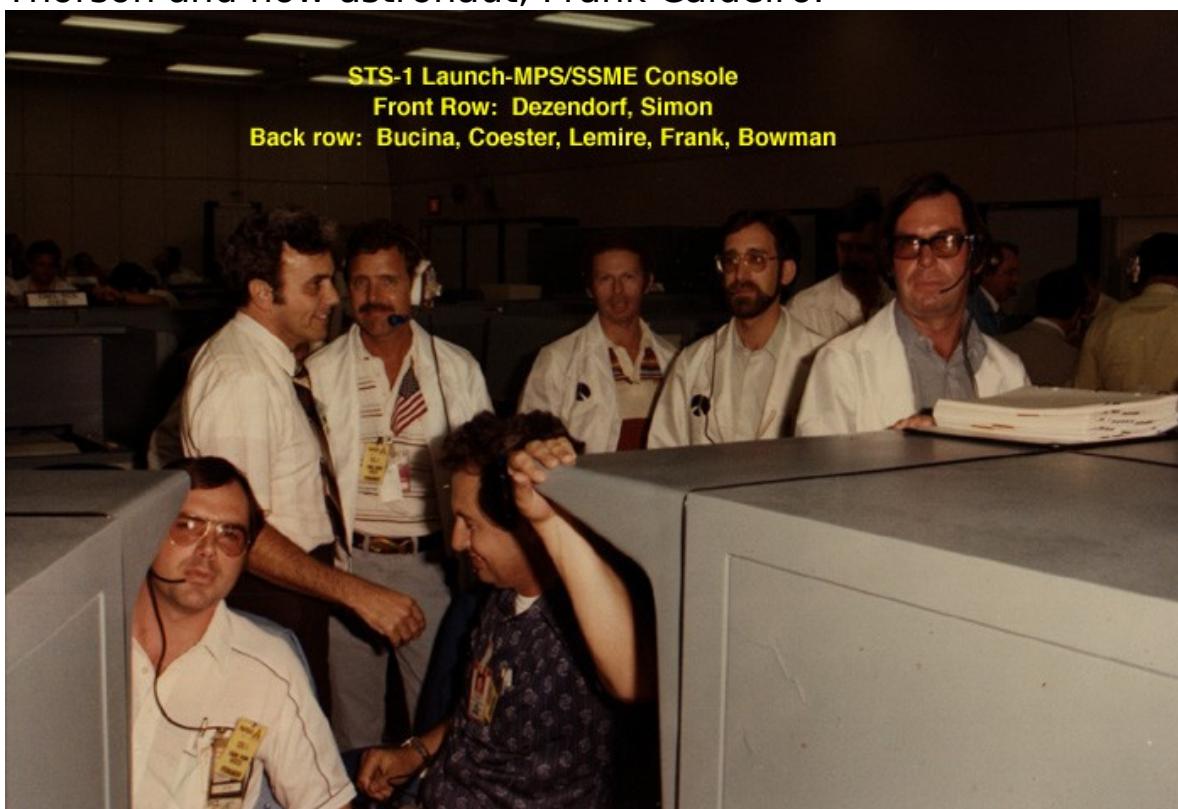
I tell a lot of stories and naturally, I suppose, I relate those that put me in a good light. Well the last one about how I fixed the Centaur vacuum system reminded me of this one that didn't turn out so well. We worked a modification to install three state of the art pressure sensors on the Centaur upper stage. They were extremely accurate and sensitive and while I forgot their exact function had something to do with controlling the RL-10 engines. I'll bet Gary Reichley remembers. After installation it was on me and my two experienced and fun technicians, Jimmy Jones, a Pearl Harbor survivor as a young sailor in 1941, and Tex Arnold a sharp mechanic who liked to play the part of a Florida redneck to check out and calibrate the newly installed transducers. Armed with flex hoses, pressure panel and extremely accurate Heise gage Jimmy and Tex performed my test procedure to verify that the transducers met their specifications and would use two out of three voting logic to control the engines. Everything was going great when it became time for lunch break. The techs closed the valves on the test panel and we left the launch tower to get a bite. When we returned thirty minutes later I glanced at the Heise gage and it was spiked out high way over the rated pressure of the new transducers. The inlet valve of the test panel had leaked and in retrospect we should have taken more steps to cut off the pressure. We had just over pressurized the three brand new instruments destroying them. Each cost \$10000

in 1975 dollars when similar but less accurate ones cost a couple of hundred dollars. Fortunately there were three spares and we repeated the installation which involved de-brazing the ruined ones and brazing in the new and completed the testing without impacting the launch. I don't even remember getting yelled at and certainly didn't get fired but remember that booboo to this day.

## 1978-1997

I was at KSC interviewing with Rockwell and James Walker/Walt Antonewski for ECLSS when Bob Bucina saw me and said if I was going to work on Shuttle it would be in Main Propulsion. Bob had been lead engineer on the Liquid Oxygen system on Apollo and we had worked closely together on that program. He was now Manager of MPS. This was in 1978 and we didn't have a Shuttle, any test procedures and no software for the new LPS computerized launch consoles. Many a long hour was spent learning the system and preparing test requirements, system and integrated procedures, and the software to operate, control and monitor everything. Bill Heink was my supervisor and Gary Frank, Bob Bowman and I prepared almost all of the first round of MPS software and test procedures. Roy Austin, Ken Kirkland Dick Carlson were instrumental for the SSME group. It was amazing that everything came together to support a STS-1 launch in 1981. By that time I was Supervisor of Main Propulsion/SSME and remained in that position until Lockheed won the Launch Processing Contract. I stayed with Rockwell as the MPS System Specialist along with Ken Smith, and later Larry Fineberg, Gary Shirey, Tom

Thorson and now astronaut, Frank Caldeiro.



I'll always remember the first Dry CDDT (Countdown Demonstration Test). It took weeks to get through the Count. Now it is routinely a half day test. Also during Dry CDDT in March 1981 where two men were killed after being cleared into the aft fuselage before the inerting nitrogen had been removed. The major fire that virtually enveloped the Space Shuttle after a SSME main fuel valve failed to close following engine abort. Inadvertently dry spinning the LH<sub>2</sub> recirculation pumps to 40000 rpm before STS-1, and overpressurizing the MPS helium tanks to almost 6000 psi (4000 psi normal). The discovery of out of round disconnect seals that caused leaks on both 17 inch disconnects and required a roll back to separate the Orbiter from the ET to repair. Developing the leak isolation test that checked out the whole MPS at one time, a major step in reducing processing time. The Big Bangs that shook the whole shuttle stack, blamed on creaky MPS expansion joints but later proven to be caused by TSM (Tail Service Mast) struts. The major modifications to the Orbiter-ET 17 inch disconnects

after they slammed closed during flow testing. Removing a leaky Gox disconnect and discovering broken belleville washers. Endless meetings to ensure all criticalites were properly categorized. The same for the OMRSD (Requirements Document). Working with the most excellent engineers at KSC, Houston and Rockwell Downey. Solving problems with John Tribe, Horace Lamberth, Bill Heink, Bob Lang, Phil Cota, Hugh Brasseaux, Don Previtt, Dave Rigby, Harv LeBlanc, Don Jones, Jay Yohinaga, Tom Shupe, Herb Wolfson, John Kremer, Bill Marumoto, Charlie Sosa, Lee Solid, John Sterritt, John Plowden and so many others. Dick Carlson for helping me spell SSME and understand its workings. The whole PSIG (Propulsion Sytems Integration Group). Most significantly, the Challenger Explosion which brought the program and all of us to our knees, only to rise again to greater accomplishments. Getting to know John Young before his first historic Shuttle flight. Working with the Test Conductors and Test Directors who did a fantastic job of integrating everything into a workable Countdown. Being a part of the finest Launch Team on Earth There were so many challenges and always the team came up with solutions.

During my service I was awarded the Silver Snoopy by Astronaut Jim Newman, the Rockwell President's Award (twice), the NASA Manned Space Flight Safety Award, and numerous NASA Achievement Awards.

The Challenger accident affected us all and after that the job lost much of its thrill for me. The last few minutes of each subsequent countdown was very emotionally trying for me and made my decision to retire in 1997 much easier. [Click Here](#) for Steve Coester's personal perspective on the Space Shuttle Challenger Disaster.

Over the years I helped launch 115 vehicles into Space, all from the Firing Room or Blockhouse. When I think of the twists and turns in our paths, I still say, " I can't think of anywhere else I'd rather have been."

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## Appendix 7

# A Space Shuttle Story Stephen Coester '63

I had several nice comments about my Apollo 11 story so I'm going to share one from thirty or so years later concerning an episode that ended up with my being the first individual recipient of the Manned

Spaceflight Safety Award along with five other NASA and contractor engineers.

Every day the technicians, engineers and quality control personnel at

Kennedy Space Center conduct tests, fix problems and make modifications. Every action is to provide the greatest margin of safety

for the astronauts who will ride the Space Shuttle. This story is little

different from hundreds of others performed by the dedicated personnel who worked on the Space Shuttle.



By this time I was a Rockwell System Specialist for the Main Propulsion System (MPS) after having been the MPS Engineering

Supervisor since the first Shuttle flight in 1981.

I'm going to try to keep this from getting too technical, but that will be

difficult. As most of you know, the Space Shuttle is assembled in

pieces with first the two large solid rocket boosters being built up on

the mobile launcher. Then the big orange external tank is lifted and

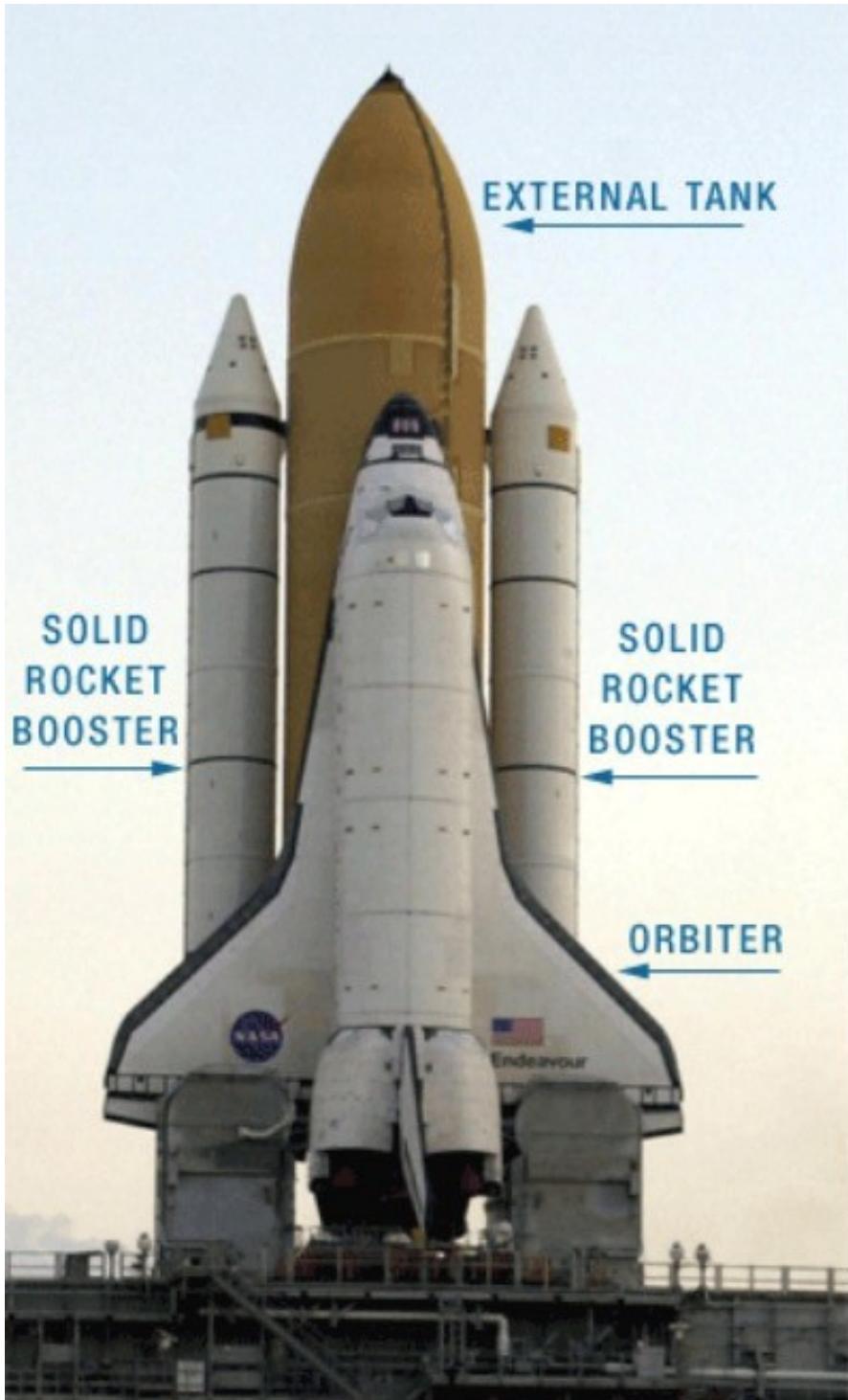
mated to the boosters. Finally the orbiter is lifted and mated to the

external tank and all connections between the orbiter and the tank

are joined together. All this occurs in the Vertical Assembly Building

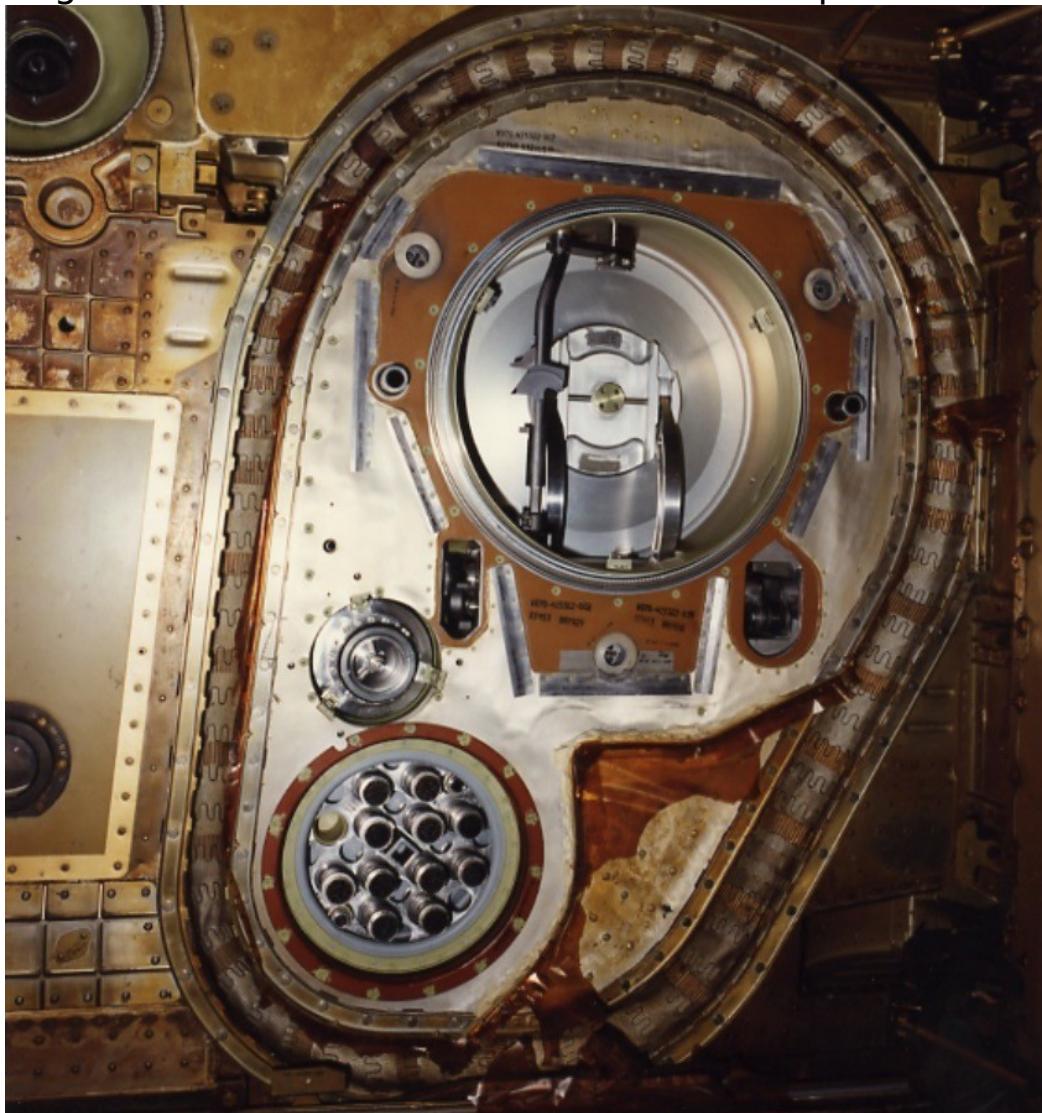
(VAB) and system checks are performed prior to moving the whole

stack the three miles to the launch pad.



For the Main Propulsion System these checks leak check the connections between the orbiter and the external tank which are located on two large umbilical plates one for liquid oxygen and one for liquid hydrogen. The LOX plate on the orbiter is shown and

mates to a similar plate on the external tank. The umbilicals are held together by three explosive bolts that go through the three holes around the large valve in the brown area shown in the photo.



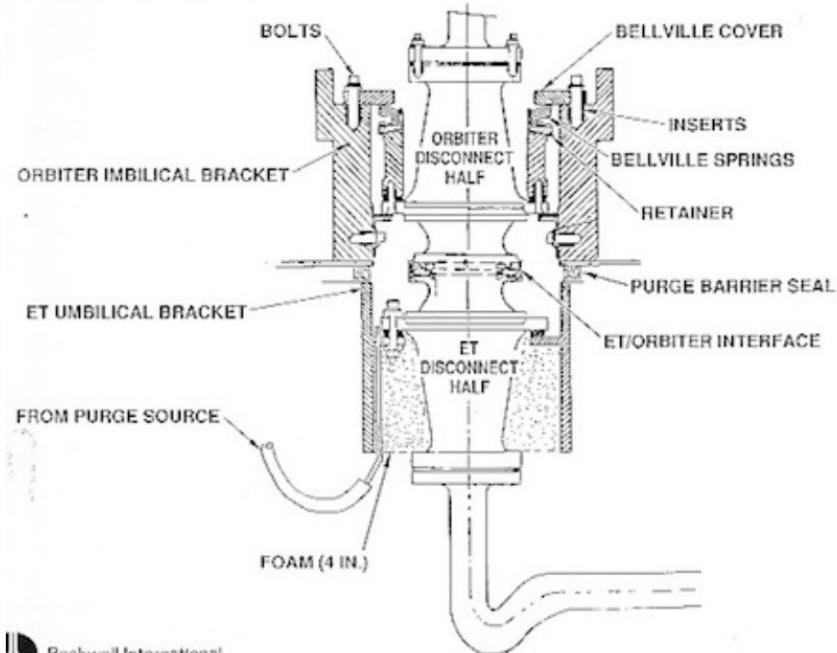


This story concerns the smaller valve to the left in the photo. It is known as the Gaseous Oxygen two inch disconnect and its purpose is to direct high temperature, high pressure gas at 400 psig from the Space Shuttle Main Engines (SSME) to the top of the Liquid Oxygen tank to pressurize the LOX tank during flight. Here's a schematic of the two inch disconnect.

COMPONENT: DISCONNECT, GH<sub>2</sub>/GO<sub>2</sub> ORBITER TO TANK  
PRESSURIZATION SYSTEM

(MC284-0391)

" DISCONNECT) TYP INSTL.



 Rockwell International  
Space Transportation  
Systems Division

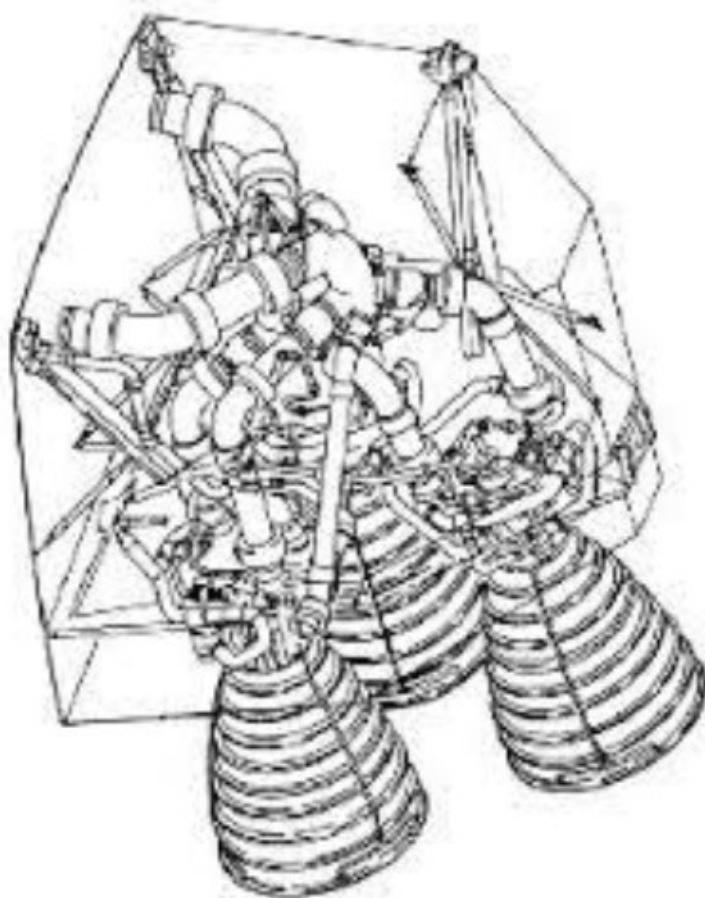
23-5

Okay now you are a Space Shuttle expert. The pre-rollout test for this assembly consists of a simple leak check of the interface between the two disconnect halves at the joint indicated as ET/Orbiter Interface on the photo. Because of external tank pressure limitations it is conducted at only 20 psig instead of its operating pressure of 400 psig. The allowable leak rate is a minuscule .29 scims, which won't mean much to you but picture perhaps a pea sized chunk of gas leaking per minute. So we ran the test and while I don't remember the exact leakage, we flunked the test, although just barely. A problem report was written and analysis began. In the meantime management decided that the

"stack" could be moved to the launch pad, which happened the next morning. I had recommended that we don't move to the pad because in all the previous Space Shuttle missions we had never experienced any leakage at this joint, but I was overruled. The design agency and NASA did their analysis and decided that the leakage we saw was acceptable for flight. I couldn't accept their reasoning because the test pressure was so far below the operating pressure and that we had never before seen any leakage. I wrote a letter to my management saying that I wouldn't sign off on acceptance of the leak. By this time I had a pretty good reputation in the MPS community so management took a second look and decided we would have to look further into the problem. The big problem now was that the Shuttle was now on the launch pad and in order to disassemble the umbilical the Shuttle would have to be returned to the Vertical Assembly building and the orbiter removed from the external tank, which would cause a significant hit to the launch schedule. I took a long look at the engineering drawings and proposed that it might be possible to do the disassembly in an unorthodox manner from inside the orbiter rather than externally. With help from my NASA and contractor engineers we developed a plan to try the removal while still connected to the external tank and still at

the  
launch pad.

Here's a schematic of the orbiter aft fuselage.



The work area would be at that big pipe right at the top.  
What isn't shown is that area is a mass of pipes, tubing and wires where it is almost impossible to even get a hand or tool into the required area.  
As a System Specialist my job was to be a design representative and advisor to the current launch contractor. But in this case everyone agreed this was my baby, so I prepared the troubleshooting plan and it was decided I would direct the removal operation. I asked for and was assigned the world's best technician and

I can't even remember his name. He should have received all the accolades after the job was done.

The technician and I crawled into the aft fuselage and wormed our way to the disconnect area. The tech reclined on a temporary work platform and reaching full arm length into the maze of tubing sequentially removed the bolts holding in the item called "bellville cover" on the schematic. I crouched beside him directing his actions and modifying the plan as we proceeded. Finally after hours of excruciating painstaking work by this dedicated technician we removed the cover.

What we found astonished us all. The bellville springs whose purpose was to provide 5000 pounds of pressure to seal the disconnect halves were cracked in half. This meant their sealing force was completely compromised and that when subjected to flight temperatures and pressures might have failed completely spraying high pressure oxygen into the aft fuselage and possibly causing a destructive explosion.

This all resulted in a redesign of the springs before putting it all back together and thankfully a safe return to flight.

At a large gathering in Cocoa Beach I was presented with the Manned Spaceflight Safety Award by the NASA Administrator Dick Gregory and received several other awards and perks such as a trip to Johnson Space Center in Houston where Yvonne and I were feted.

I also met this young lady who looked like a recent college grad named Eileen Collins. Turned out she was a new un-flown astronaut who would later become the first female Space Shuttle Commander! I was surprised at all the attention and just considered it part of the job and was thankful that management finally listened to my concerns.

A funny sequel to this story is that after receiving the award from Administrator Dick Gregory, as I turned to exit the stage, I fell off of it about three feet to a concrete floor. I was holding the spear pointed award as I fell and it passed between my arm and chest. I was hurt slightly from the fall but fortunately not speared. Nobody even noticed my fall as they were all returning to the bar. I could just picture the headline in the newspaper: "Space Scientist stabbed by Safety Award!".

Sorry for all the technical details.



Steve

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## Appendix 8

### Yvonne and Steve Coester's Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary



June 21, 1963 -2013

Fifty years have come and gone in a flash with two kids, three grandchildren, four dogs, about twenty cats and a couple of fish. A lifetime of great experiences together: camping and SCUBA diving and skiing all over the world. Traveling to exotic destinations in Mexico, Europe, Australia, Alaska, Central America, Hawaii and the Caribbean. It's been a great run.



k

In December 1961 Steve was a third year midshipman at the U.S. Naval Academy.

Yvonne had just turned nineteen and had come to America from her home in Sweden after a year spent obtaining her Green Card. She had known for years she wanted to come to the USA to work in the fashion industry.



She was living in NYC on 44th Street with three other young ladies, one of which was dating a midshipman. She was asked to be a blind date for a Naval Academy exchange weekend at the Military Academy at West Point. She had a date with one of Steve's friends whom she dated several times along with a few other midshipmen.

Flash forward to June Week of 1962. Steve's friend who had his real girlfriend down in South Carolina asked Steve if he wanted to take Yvonne to the June Week festivities and the Class of 1963 Ring Dance. Steve had never met Yvonne nor any other Swede, was pretty shy and said no thanks so another classmate agreed to take her. Steve invited an old high school friend from St. Louis instead.

All the girls were in the same cabin in the Sherwood Forest section of Annapolis taken that date. She was the prettiest thing he'd ever seen.



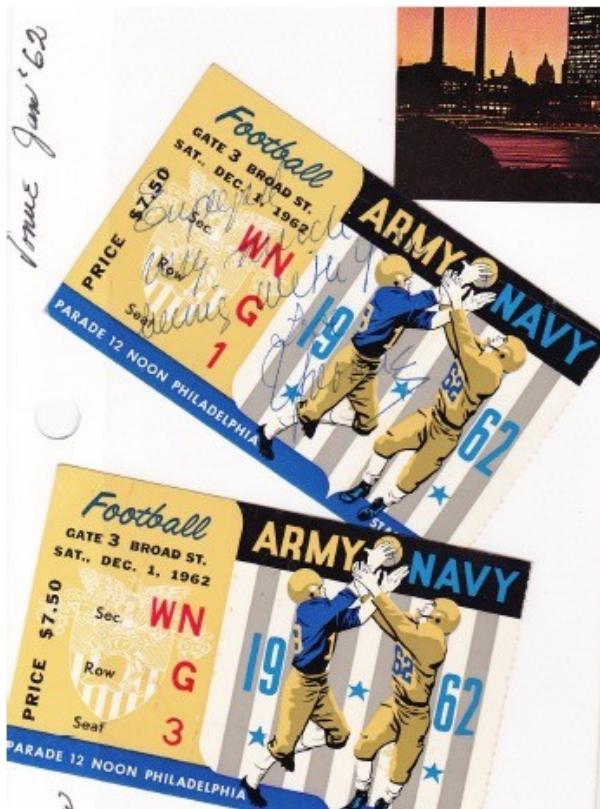
During June Week it was obvious the Yvonne and Steve really liked each other, but the week ended and everyone went their separate ways. While Steve was on his one month of summer leave in St. Louis the girl he had taken to June Week casually asked if he had written to Yvonne because she really liked him. He said no but decided to send her a card with his photo and asking

if he could visit her in New York after his naval cruise to Spain, France and Italy. After the cruise ended in late August they finally got together for a weekend in New York with other classmates and their dates and that was the start of a whirlwind romance.





They dated a couple of times in Annapolis and a couple of times in New York and had football weekends for the Notre Dame and Army games in Philadelphia.



After a formal dance at Annapolis with Yvonne in a beautiful gown and Steve in full dress blues they became "pinned"

when Steve gave Yvonne his class crest



December of 1962 came and Yvonne had to return home to Stockholm after her year in the States. Before she left, Steve asked her to marry him after just six dates. They wouldn't see each other for six months until he graduated in June 1963.

Steve sent Yvonne the engagement ring, a miniature of his class ring to her home in Sundbyberg, Sweden. The little ring was in a big box cushioned with rolls of good American toilet paper. That won over Yvonne's parents because European toilet paper was like butcher paper.



Both Yvonne and Steve were great letter writers so almost every day a letter would arrive in Annapolis and Stockholm with the news from two weeks ago. Back then people didn't call long distance as it was very expensive and there was no email.

Shortly before Steve's graduation, Yvonne got cold feet because of relentless pressure from her Dad not to marry that American. Finally Steve phoned her and they agreed that after he graduated he would go to Stockholm and they would decide whether to go through with the wedding.

Another complication was Steve was nominated for a two year Rhodes Scholarship at Oxford University and that required the recipient to be single. "Luckily" for the wedding Steve didn't get the scholarship.

He went to Sweden and they looked at each other and said yes! They spent an idyllic week on the Swedish island of Öland and the wedding was definitely on.

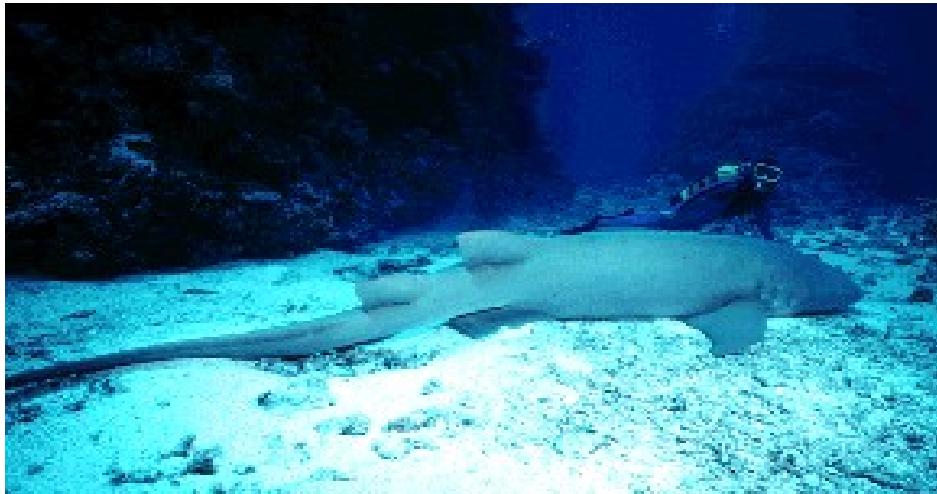
On Midsummers Eve June 21, 1963 they were wed in a little chapel in Sundbyberg, Sweden. A honeymoon in Oslo, Norway followed by a flight back to the USA where married life began.



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## Appendix 9

### Steve's Shark and Cave Adventure



In 1975 Eugenie Clark established her reputation as a marine biologist when she led a National Geographic expedition to film the sleeping sharks in the caves of Yucatan. Until this time it was generally believed that sharks had to continuously swim to force water through their gills

allowing them to breath. Unknown to the world in about 1970 I found a cave full of motionless sharks. I was not a biologist and whereas I had heard the supposed fact that sharks had to always swim and was surprised to find them lying still in a cave, I presumed it was a well known fact. I had to laugh when I later saw the National Geographic discovery.

I was on a KSC Barracudas dive trip for a week in the Bahamas. We were north of Andros Island right at the western edge of the Tongue of the Ocean where depths drop precipitously from ten feet to several thousand. I was diving in about eighty feet of water spearfishing for the boat's supper. I suddenly noticed a large grouper swim past me with a chunk torn from its side probably from somebody's blotched spear shot. I followed the injured fish until it disappeared under a coral ledge. I kicked over to the ledge and ducked my head into the foot high opening trying to see the grouper in the almost total darkness. Suddenly I sensed motion on either side of me and withdrew from the hole to see two large eight foot nurse sharks swimming away. This freaked me out a little so I looked up and saw a swimmer snorkling on the surface. I swam up and he said, "What was that all about?", recounting that he had seen me enter the cave and two sharks coming out and disappearing.

Well I figured the sharks were gone so I could go back and finish off that injured fish so I returned to the depths. I again stuck my head in the hole and saw that it extended back beyond where I could see. I also saw my grouper patiently sitting there about ten feet in. I let loose with my spear and made a clean hit all the way through the fish. It thrashed and suddenly pulled off of my spear and disappeared. I couldn't understand this until I saw my barbed spear point resting on the sand about twelve feet inside the cave. It had unscrewed from the spear shaft and the fish had pulled off.

This was my only spear point so I decided I'd try to retrieve it. I started to worm my way into the cave only to discover that the cave roof was too low to allow me and my tank to squeeze in. No problem, I released my tank straps

and took off the tank keeping the regulator firmly in my mouth. Now I could slip into the cave with my mask digging into the sand and my back scraping the cave roof. Not too smart, but I was young and indestructible. I got within arm's reach of the spear point, the object of this whole exercise. As I reached out for the point what do I see about a foot beyond the point but a nose and teeth of a shark looking right at me.

Suddenly there was a great deal of turbulence and the sand swirled causing visibility to go to zero. There was no way I could move being wedged in so tightly. I waited to die. Gradually the sand settled and I could see again and I was still in one piece. The spear point was still where it was the last time I had seen it, but now instead of the shark's snout, I saw the long curved tail next to the point. I thought, what the heck I've made it this far inched in the final foot and grabbed the spear point from under that shark's tail.

Now all I had to do was figure out how to extricate myself as I was pretty well wedged in. As I turned my head hither and yon, I was amazed to see several other sharks sitting motionlessly in the recesses of the cave. I slid myself slowly backwards pulling my tank along with me and managed finally to get out of the cave. In retrospect how stupid the whole thing was. I was buddyless and could have easily snagged someting on the cave ceiling that would have caused me to be stuck until I ran out of air and drowned or became shark food. I wouldn't have returned to the boat and being totally out of sight in the cave probably never would have been found. Another mystery of the Bermuda Triangle.

But it all worked out and I kept that old rusty spear point in my tackle box for years as a talisman of my good luck on that day. One day years later another diver needed a point and I reluctantly lent him that one. Again it unscrewed from his shaft and this time was lost forever. I was crushed to have it gone, but obviously I still have the memory.

Steve Coester 2001

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## Appendix 10

### Yvonne and the Giant Shark



Yvonne looked beautiful. She also looked scared as she steadied herself on the gently rocking boat. The dive gear was piled around her feet and she was trying to remember how to hook the regulator to the SCUBA tank. Today was to be her first dive into the ocean depths and you could tell by looking at her she was having second thoughts. How had she gotten to this point?

The year was 1972. The Viet Nam war was in full swing. We had landed men on the moon, brought them safely home, and become bored that they weren't doing more up there. The pill had released women from their sexual bonds and the age of free love was upon us. We had produced the standard two children and were approaching that hardest of all birthdays, number thirty. I had started diving five years earlier and for awhile would blithely leave the wife and kids

at home to go diving. Then Yvonne started noticing other marriages breaking up among our diving friends. The culprit was always that hubby had met a sweet young thing who shared the diving experience. The stories about ship board romances are true, and it's easy to fall in love on a balmy Bahamas evening drinking rum and watching the falling stars from the deck of a seductively swaying deck. Not that I had ever been tempted by the smooth skin, the heaving breasts, the flaxon hair and tiny bikinis of the nubile young maidens that joined us on our dives. Well maybe once or twice.

At any rate Yvonne decided that if you can't beat 'em, you better join 'em, and for a couple of years she came along on the trips just for the ride. She'd sunbathe, swim a little, float in a tube and look distainingly at the idiots carrying all those tons of gear to actually go under the water. She was happy and I was happy because I was still able to go diving and no longer had to fend off the hoards of single women lusting for my body. In my dreams. Well this went on for quite some time . Then surfacing from one of my dives, Yvonne's first words to me were, "Well, you idiots keep doing it so there must be something down there. I think I'll take some lessons". Well I practically fell back into the ocean I was so surprised.

You have to understand that Yvonne was barely a swimmer. She grew up in Stockholm, Sweden where it's just too damn cold to swim much. She could do the classic European breast stroke, and believe it or not, had never put her head under water in twenty-nine years of living. After we returned from that dive trip, we went down to the O-Club pool. I tossed a penny into the shallow end and told her to dive down into the three foot depths and pick it up. Well, Yvonne looked at me like I was stark raving mad and made some remark about getting her hair wet. I instinctively knew dive training was going to be an interesting experience for both of us.

Actually once we changed instructors (the first one thought he was a drill sergeant) she did pretty well in the pool. Her lovely blond hair turned chlorine green for the first

time in her life and she learned the fundamentals of snorkeling and SCUBA. The class work was a different story. First, English is a second language for Yvonne. Second she has a long lasting aversion to anything mathematical. At that time the geniuses that came up with the SCUBA courses thought that you should be a nuclear physicist to dive so the courses made you learn Boyle's Law, Bernoulli's Principle, Henry's Law, etc., etc. As if when you were 150 feet under the water you were going to pull out your sliderule and perform algebraic calculations to determine that you had just taken your last breath of air out of the tank. Needless to say, she hated the course, almost quit ten times in ten weeks and still didn't think much of this putting your head under water. Somehow she passed both written and swimming tests. We still think it was more because of how she filled her bikini than by the answers on the test.

After a checkout dive in a Florida spring, she was ready for the ocean. I got her geared up, had her spit in her mask, and we were ready to go. Yvonne jumped in and headed for the bottom which was a long sixty feet away. When I got down she was already waiting for me at the bottom. It turns out that she can easily clear her ears continuously while descending. I have to descend, stop, clear, descend and so forth, so she always beats me to the bottom. I gave her the old thumbs up sign and she smiled and returned it. Things were looking up. This really was going to work. We were going to be dive buddies. We kicked around for a few minutes enjoying the beautiful corals, the tropical fish, and the canyon like crevices. Then I saw a eating size grouper and became Steve the Hunter. I fired a spear at the fish and to my dismay missed. As I was reeling in the line between spear and gun, I glanced back at Yvonne. She was frozen in fear with her eyes completely filling her mask. I looked, and swimming by us no more than twenty feet away was the goddamndest biggest shark I had ever seen in my life. Let me dispel a myth about diving. Really, really you seldom ever see a shark while you're down there. Much less a monster like this one.

This big fella was a hammerhead. I have no idea how big

it really was, but underwater with the natural magnification from the dive mask, it looked to be at least fifteen feet long. The most impressive thing about this fish was that it was as wide as a fifty gallon drum with a big belly. It looked like it could swallow a diver without even chewing him up first. Never in my previous five years of diving had I ever seen it's equal.

About this time Yvonne came out of her frozen state and decided that she'd had just about enough diving for that day or for that life. Remember "The Deep" where the heroine suddenly goes clawing for the surface. That was how Yvonne reacted. Suddenly she was racing upward, anything to get away from the monster. I reached up as she swam by me and grabbed her by the ankle and yanked her back down into the crevice where I was cowering. I signaled that we were a lot safer down in this hole than floating up on the surface where we'd be easy prey.

The shark continued to drift past us. I am convinced it had one eye turned toward us deciding if we were going to be its next meal. As it went by I started to relax a little thinking we were out of the woods (perhaps a poor analogy). Then suddenly the monster turned and glared at us. I'd like to say my life passed in front of my eyes, but actually I think I just peed. My spear gun was unloaded, not that it would have affected this big fish. It would have been like shooting a grizzly with a peashooter. We were defenseless. Finally after an eternity of playing stare down the shark, it whisked it tail and disappeared into the gloom.

Now I had a decision to make. I knew I was mildly frightened so Yvonne had to be terrified. I figured that if she surfaced now that would be the end of her fledgling life as a mermaid. She was frantically making signals to go up and I was trying to calm her and continue the dive. The next thirty minutes passed uneventfully, although, I spent a lot of time twisting my neck looking for that shark. Finally I allowed her to return to the boat.

What thanks did I get for first saving her life from a girl-eating shark and then touring the reef with her? None, and that's putting it mildly. I got the tongue lashing of our

previously happy nine years of wedded bliss, and was told in no uncertain terms that she had wasted time, money and almost lost her life, and was absolutely never going to do anything so stupid again, ever!

A couple of hours later after satisfying our required surface interval so we wouldn't get the bends, I built up the nerve to speak to her again and politely inquired if she was ready for her second ocean dive. To my surprise, she declined. There is just no understanding women. I judged that discretion was the better part of valor and said I'd just take a short dive by myself and report back on what I saw. And, that one almost never sees sharks. I had my dive and darned if I didn't see another shark. This was a small one, nothing like Moby Shark. When I surfaced, Yvonne asked how it was and did I see any sharks. Sometimes a little white lie is justified so I said, "Darling, there's not another shark in the whole darn ocean. It was a beautiful dive with glorious little fish and colorful corals and that Cousteau would give his left flipper for a chance to dive this place." She was unimpressed by my enthusiasm.

The next day I geared up and was ready to dive alone when Yvonne said, "Hey, wait for me, I guess I'll try it again". There really is no understanding women.

Steve Coester 2001

Jerry Thornton who read the above account and who was on this trip with us sent the following:

I certainly can verify this story. I have told it many times myself, although not as eloquently as you. I would like to add that I had been down with you two with two cameras and had just run out of film with one of the cameras and was on my way back up to the boat when the shark appeared. I did not see it at first until the absence of divers caught my attention. Then I saw the air bubbles coming out of the trenches in the reef. All the divers were hiding. One of the divers stuck his head out when he saw me and made "chomping" motions with his hand. I turned and saw the shark circling you and Yvonne with her cowering behind you. I suddenly thought of myself as shark bait halfway up to the

boat and all by myself. I raced on up to the boat, told the divemaster what was happening and asked for the bang stick. He gave it to me and I headed for the back of the boat. I never made it to the water! All the divers were clambering aboard over each others backs like a Keystone! Cops movie. I also remember that we were missing one diver. One of the guys had wandered off by himself as usual. About 20 minutes later he showed up and could not understand what the excitement was about. Ah, the good old days!! Life is so boring now.

Jerry T.

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## Appendix 11

### Grabbed By An Octopus



Yvonne and I were on a dream trip to Maui and along with bike riding down Mount Haleakala and driving the Road to Hana decided to go SCUBA diving. While submerged the leader pointed out an octopus in a hole. I thought I might be able to grab it and pull it out so I reached into the hole which wasn't much wider than my hand. Suddenly I was in to my elbow and the

octopus had grabbed me instead of vice versa. I pulled and it pulled and I was losing. I had visions of being stuck there until I ran out of air or someone cut off my arm. Also I could picture that wicked beak starting to rip my flesh. Finally I managed to wrench my arm free and it was covered with silver dollar sized suction marks. That critter was a lot larger than I thought. Live and learn, although I seem to be a slow learner.

### Love Affair With a Moray Eel



Here's a surreal tale from one of our SCUBA dives in Cozumel. I had noticed one of our Mexican guides coaxing a spotted moray out of its hole and decided to try it. I took off my glove and gently waved it in front of a moray eel. Sure enough it came part way out of the hole to investigate. It looked so relaxed that I reached out to touch its side and then to pet it. The eel then swam totally out of the hole and began to swim by me rubbing up against my arms and legs like a house cat. I put my hands on both of its sides and stroked it and we had several very special moments of love in the depths. An ironic postscript was that the next day when we showed up at the dive boat, the guide

that started it all had his hand heavily bandaged. He had been badly bitten by a moray eel.

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## Appendix 12

### Aground at Sea A Poem by Steve Coester



Background: It was July 14, 1981 which just happened to be my 40th birthday. Yvonne, Dean and I were on the Shark XII, a fifty foot bareboat charter sailboat with about twelve other SCUBA divers captained by Leon Dufresne. The trip was a planned two weeker out of Government Cut, Miami with some of the divers staying for the whole time and some flying back to the U.S. from Andros while others flew into Andros for the second week. We had sailed out of Miami on July 12 after fighting generator problems all the previous night. Had some great dives at the Gingerbread Grounds where we had a good Mako shark experience after spending the night at Great Issac Light where we climbed the light and took some of the old lenses. The night of the 13th we were sailing across the flats to get to Chub Cay and were using a LORAN receiver for the first time to ensure we didn't get out of the channel which is narrow and no more than ten feet deep. Alas, we didn't know that the LORAN accuracy was degraded in the Bahamas and we ended up aground miles from anywhere. We were aground for at least two tide changes and were beginning to fear that we'd be there

forever. We attempted digging around the hull, warping the anchor, and even used the air compressor to try to blow away the substrate from around the boat. all to no avail. Finally after about twelve hours of sitting on a canted boat the tide leveled us out and barely floated us. We sent Dean up to the mast head and I stood at the bow with a lead line checking the depth. Leon steered per Dean's guess of where lay the deepest water. After going aground a few more times we finally got to deep water. The next morning at 0400 I penned this poem.

### The Poem

As we sailed the Ocean boundless  
Any fears would be quite groundless.  
The seas were calm and skies were clear  
A gentle rocking eased all fears.

But things can change for those who sail  
As this epic shall soon regale.  
For the best of parties can turn sour  
And it seemed that now became OUR hour.

We sailed on and on into the night  
Without landfall or view of a light.  
Until at four we changed our course  
And things became a whole lot worse.

We knew we were near our goal  
When the lookout said, "Bless my soul"  
"I see a light out in that place  
Soon we'll finish our little race"

So we headed toward the blinking  
Of our fate we had no inkling.  
Like sheep heading to their kill  
Soon we'd swallow our bitter pill.

The light that pulled us toward its glow  
Really meant don't come, but go.

For what we saw was blinking red  
Enter here and end up dead.

The Shark continued in its folly  
And moods became much less jolly.  
Can there be a more horrible sound  
Than when a ship runs aground?

We felt a shake and heard a grinding  
Our progress stopped, we were binding  
Upon the sand and in the shallow  
That was the pill we had to swallow.

The boat was caught by outgoing tide  
So we had some time with which to abide.  
Some would swim and some would worry,  
The useless thing would be to hurry.

The tide comes in and tide goes out  
More in a whisper than a shout.  
As the day was getting late  
All we could do was wait, wait, wait.

The sun was hot and often glaring  
We fought to keep tempers from flaring.  
Caught upon a sandy slope  
We were mad and without hope.

Ever so slowly the tide came in  
We wondered have we paid for our sins?  
Will the Master in the sky  
Release our bonds so we can fly.

Finally after many hours  
Of digging with all our power  
The sea lifted us off the sand  
So we could sail to the good land.

Well even that was not so easy  
And as I tell this I feel queasy.

Because as we looked all around  
What we saw was mostly ground.

My son high up on the mast  
Said, "I see a way at last."  
So we followed Dean's direction  
And came upon our resurrection.

It happened on Steve's birthday  
A day to remember in many ways.  
Now we'll do some serious driving  
So we can catch up on our diving.

Steve Coester 1981

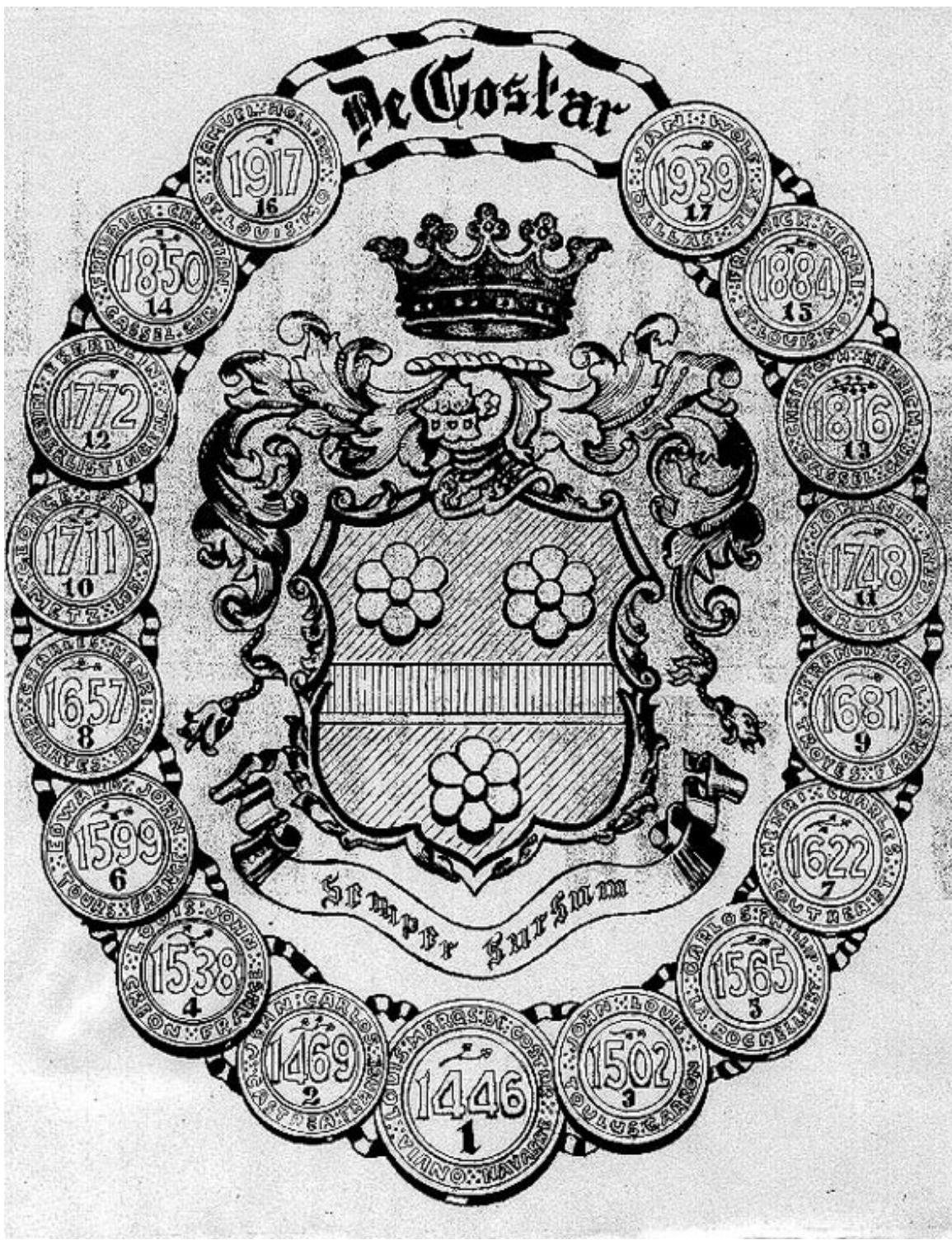
That wasn't the end of our adventures that trip. At Green Cay we noticed about thirty people waving to us from the shore of this uninhabited island. They were Haitian refugees who had been dropped off by a person smuggler. We felt we had to help them although it was impossible to take thirty of them on board, and we were leary of them. We rowed the dingy in and gave them water and food. At Congo Town, Andros we mentioned them to the head man and requested he notify Nassau so they could be rescued. He replied, "No mon, if we call Nassau they'll just come out and machine gun them." True or not I'll never forget that. I have no idea what happened to those poor folks. At the end of our week we flew back and the pilot let Dean, who had just soloed, fly us back to Merrit Island.

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Appendix 13



Coester Coat of Arms



Coat of Arms listing all first sons back to 1446

Research by my nephew Dan Coester:  
My stambuch is a copy made in the early 1800's and brought

to America at  
that time. Since then it was passed down to eldest son to  
eldest son ..  
until I received it in mid 1980.

When in the Army, I was stationed in Fulda, Germany with  
the 11th ACR  
(Blackhorse) as a Captain. I flew helicopters while there.  
When driving  
from Fulda to Frankfort, I kept passing by the "Coestersche  
Apotheke",  
translated as "Coester's Pharmacy". I dropped in to meet  
Conrad Coester  
and his son Conrad. They also had a Stambuch which trace  
our roots back to  
two brothers who settled in Niederlistingen very similar to  
mine. The  
beginnings were identical which suggests that our  
stambuchs were copied  
from the same original in early 1800.

My wife and I over the next couple of years met with other  
Coesters who  
each had similar stambuchs and even went to  
Niederlistingen to visit the  
Rote Hause as mentioned in the Stambuch. If you ever get  
the chance to go  
to Germany, I highly recommend the trip. Displayed in the  
house built over  
the original Rote Hause (Red House) is the wooden ceiling  
brace with the  
Coester "three roses" engraved into it. The Red House is  
quite the legend  
in Niederlistingen.

Niederlistingen is a very small, quaint, german village  
located just west  
of Kassel. What was neat was finding lots of Coesters. The  
small church

has the names of Coesters who died in various conflicts over several hundred years. I grew up knowing only my immediate family. My grandfather and my great uncle had a constant debate on how to pronounce our name. My grandfather and I pronounce our name (Kester). My great uncle and his kids now pronounce their name with a long o sound.

Apparently, according to the German Coester's, there are two Coester lines (line A & line B) dependant upon which brother you descend from. My family tree is along line B while the Coester's in Germany very clearly belong to line A.

Our stambuchs are very similar. As the family tree gets older, there is some confusion sorting out the original couple generations. It varies dependant upon which book you read. I believe the confusion comes because of similar names. One same Coester women is seeminly married to different Coester men with the same name but from different generations. Seems like some in-breeding if you believe one of the family trees. One family tree calls out a young Coester (a soldier) who came from somewhere else with the same name. So I think we are talking three different men, not just two. This makes the beginning of the trees hard to reconcile and inconsistent. I would love to go back to Germany now and try to get this worked out.

The family crest and the family origins are also points of contention. The lore is that Coester's before Germany were "De Costas" who fled France (near Lyon) from Huguenotten persecution. We have pictures of the female crest of three roses but noone has yet come across the original male family crest which would confirm this lore once and for all. I guess this calls for a trip to Lyons, France, too.

One Germany Coester is adamant that the Coester name is nothing more than a derivative of the Dutch word for "of the church", and that the Coester's did not come from France. He contends that the original Coesters were educated freeman who worked for the church and for royalty in such fields as accounting, arithmetic, book-keeping etc. and probably moved to Niederlistingen from some other place not too far away to avoid the periodic wars which pillaged this part of Europe.

What is clear is that Coesters in America were 2nd or 3rd sons who emigrated to the promise of the new world. My great, great, great, great grandfather came to America via St. Louis in the 1840's. Other Coester's at different times enter America at Portland, Oregon or New York, New York.

The potential very much exists to complete a very accurate family book especially with the aid of the computer.

This account is all written from memory while I sit here at work since my records are at home so please excuse factual errors. Give me a few weeks to neaten up the Family Tree Maker files and we can then share specifics.

I look forward to seeing what you all have too. This could be fun.

Dan

### More from Dan

Hi to all. I followed up on my last message and thought I'd share. My family book can go back to Johann Justus Coester, born 1747, with ease and is confirmed by William Coester's family book. My great grandfather, Frederick Henri Coester, 1884, apparently did some research and asserts that our lineage goes directly back to Charles III of Navarres, 1350. It would be interesting if anyone has anyway to confirm this information.

Below I provide some details...

1. I can list my direct descendants as follows

Daniel Wilcox Coester, 3.4.1962, #1 child  
+ Angelika Brunhilde Lippke, 2.20.1961. of Fulda, Germany  
Jan Wolf Coester, 9.14.1939, #1 child,  
+ Bonnie Lu Wilcox, 2.14.1942  
Samuel Holliday Coester 1917 - 1993  
+ Lois Wolf 1920 - 1985  
Frederick Henri Coester 1884 - 1956  
+ Florence Alexander Holliday 1892 -  
Fredrich Christian Coester 1850 - 1894  
+ Emily Augusta Ruff 1855 - 1931  
Christoph Heinrich August Coester 1816 - 1878

+ Auguste Breithaupt	- 1857
Eberwein Coester	1772 - 1834
*2nd Wife of Eberwein Coester:	
+ Catherine Elisabeth Rehrwald	
Johann Justus Coester ***	1747/48 - 1824
+Anna Maria Mueller	1753 - 1815

\*\*\*Note: Johann Justus Coester is listed in both my copy of the family book and the copy I made of a Coester Stammbuch in Germany. This copy is the same copy that William Coester has shared via his CD. According to this 2nd Stammbuch, the next descendants are

George Justus Coester, No 2, Gen II, Pg 103, no dob given.  
Stammbuch calls  
George the start of Linie B.  
Johann Henric Coester, No1, Gen I, Pg 13, no dob given  
George Eberweyn Coester, Pg 13, no dob given

However, according to my great grandfather, Frederick Henri Coester, born 1884, the rest of the family tree looks like this.

My family book, entry made and apparently researched by my Great Grand Father, Frederick Henri Coester, states that Johann Justus lineage is as follows

Johann Justus Coester, 1748, #1 child  
George Francis Coester, 1711, #4 child  
Francis De Costar, 1681, #1 child  
Charles Henri De Costar, 1657, #2 child  
Henri Charles De Costar- Coutrea, BT, 1622, #3 child  
Edward John De Costar - Tours, 1599, #3 child  
Charles Phillip De Costar - Marquis, 1565, #2 child  
Louis John Greon De Costar - 1538 #2 child

John-Louis of Toulus-Garron, 1502, #2 child  
Jean Carlos De Castrea, 1469, #3 child  
Louis De Costes - Sieur De Corda, 1446 - FIRST COSTAR  
Charles of Viano, 1421  
John of Aragon married to Blanche of Navarre, 1402  
Charles III, King of Navarre, 1350

Therefore, according to my great, grand father, and I'd like to make some research to confirm and perhaps some you might know, that I am the direct descendant of Charles III, King of Navarre, 1350.

Hope you find this interesting,

Dan

### Coester link to the presidents Bush

This is probably of primary interest to Dan, our genealogist, but all of you may be intrigued. Look at the family tree for President Bush.

<<http://pickle.gsfc.nasa.gov/uspres/D0001/G0000017.html#1698>> . Note that Nannie Holliday is George's mother's grandmother. I had been told by Uncle Newt that we were somehow related to Bush, but this is the first time I'd seen a tree. The best I can tell Jan and I have a great, great, great grandfather, Major Joseph Holliday, born about 1790, who fathered Bush's great grandmother, Nannie Holliday. Joseph Holiday also fathered eight other children, one of whom was Samuel Newton Holliday who is our great, great grandfather and who fathered Joseph Glasly(?) Holliday who would be our great grandfather who fathered Florence Holliday who is our grandmother.

I'd say the blood has thinned out quite a bit in all those generations, but there is a direct link.

My grandmother Florence Holliday Coester



Florence's Wedding announcement

Serian was taken to Alton  
in the machine.  
His machine is a black touring car.  
It bore Missouri license No. 12048.

## MISS HOLLIDAY AND F. H. COESTER TO WED

### Marriage to Precede Change of His Place of Business.

AKERS  
address, ends, be-  
s Men's avenue,  
Bridge : Roger  
al Coun-  
t Central  
e streets;  
on Hall,  
Robert C.  
Lindell  
pany, showed his sweethe-  
they were lunching together at a down-  
town cafe, a telegram transferring him  
to Los Angeles, Cal., as assistant to  
Charles H. Smith, capitalist and direc-  
tor of a large motor truck company of  
Detroit.

NY  
DRAMA  
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old, was

A series of pretty coincidents weave  
themselves around the wedding date,  
which is the result of a near-elopement  
planned when Mr. Coester, who is co-

pany, showed his sweethe-  
they were lunching together at a down-  
town cafe, a telegram transferring him  
to Los Angeles, Cal., as assistant to  
Charles H. Smith, capitalist and direc-  
tor of a large motor truck company of  
Detroit.

Asked whether she would accom-  
pany her fiance, Miss Holliday nodded  
an affirmative, and the couple was  
soon speeding to Clayton. Midway  
there they suddenly returned to the  
office of Mr. Holliday, in the LaSalle  
Building, there to get the parental  
consent.

The couple, both of whom are so-  
cially prominent, have been engaged  
for several months, and there was no  
objection to the match. However, Mr.  
Holliday stipulated there must be a  
"regular" wedding, and the date, Oct.  
26, was set. Shortly after making the  
date, Mr. Coester received a telegram  
which may mean that he will continue  
to remain in St. Louis.

Miss Holliday is an attractive young  
woman, and a graduate of Mary In-  
stitute. She is a sister of Mrs. Charles  
Bacon and Jacob and Sam Holliday.

Mr. Coester, who resides in Compton  
Heights, is a member of the Century  
Boat Club, the Sunset Inn Country  
Club and the Leiderkranz Club. He  
was a member of Light Battery A,  
later being appointed to Gen. Harvey  
G. Clark's staff, and was selected as  
an aid to attend President Taft's in-  
auguration. He served as librarian for  
the Amphion Club. After a honey-

## A Holliday death notice:

'84—**Joseph Glasby Holliday** died in St. Louis, Mo., on January 22. His death was due to influenza. He was born September 14, 1861, in St. Louis, his parents being Samuel Newton and Maria Fithian (**Glasby**) Holliday. He entered Yale from Smith Academy in St. Louis. He was a member of Kappa Sigma Epsilon, Psi Upsilon, and Wolf's Head, divided the Scott prize in French, and received an oration Senior appointment. In 1886 he took his LL.B., *magna cum laude*, at Washington University, St. Louis. He afterwards practiced law in that city, at first with his father and later on alone, devoting himself principally to probate matters. In 1907 he was president of the Yale Alumni Association of St. Louis. He was married July 15, 1885, to Harriet Elizabeth Alexander. They had six children; two of the sons are Yale graduates, Samuel N. Holliday, 2d. '08, and **Joseph H. Holliday**, '13. A daughter is the wife of Charles E. Bascom, ex-'00 S.

The Journal of Joseph Holliday born 1789

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Name: Major Joseph HOLLIDAY

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Birth: September 15, 1789 Harrison County, Kentucky

Death: December 17, 1870 Monroe County, Missouri Age: 81

Father: William HOLLIDAY (1755->1811)

Mother: Martha PATTON (~1754-1816)

Autobiography of Joseph Holliday (1861)

Copy annotated by his son, Samuel Newton Holliday, St. Louis, Mo. (1863)

I was born on the fifteenth (sic) day of September, 1789. in what was then

Bourbon Co., Ky., now Harrison Co., about three miles southwest from where

Cynthiana now is, on a bluff of Gray's Run, on the south side thereof, just above its mouth.

My father's name was William Holliday. He was born in Ireland, near

Londonberry, and came to America when he was seventeen years of age. He

came to Pennsylvania where he married Martha Patton. She also came from

Ireland, when she was eleven years of age, with her father and mother and a

large family of brothers and sisters. When last heard from, two sisters of my

mother were living near Urbana, Ohio; one named Nancy Steele, a widow; and,

the other named Polly Wright, also a widow. They had a great many children.

In the north of Ireland there was a Rebellion, about the year 1772, I think, the

rebels belonged to a society named the Hearts of Steele (refer below under

"History" for a brief summary of The Hearts of Steel). They rebelled against

the government, endeavoring to regain the lost liberty of Ireland, but did not

accomplish much. There were a great many of them, but they could not do

anything against the British Army. My father was a member of the Hearts of

Steele, and as the British Government had detected the movements of the

Society, and was endeavoring to ferret out its members, my father escaped in a

vessel and came to America, in the year 1772. He had no brothers. He had only

one sister I think her name was Martha (her name was June). She (Jane) married her cousin Joseph Holliday in Ireland. They came to America, and settled in Pennsylvania. Her husband, Joseph Holliday, was killed in Pennsylvania by the falling of a tree, which was cut down for a coon. He was holding the dogs, and, the tree falling the wrong way, killed him. They had two children; one son named Samuel, who has a family of children some where in Ohio. Sam was killed a few years ago, not far from Lebanon, Ohio, on Point Creek. He was hauling a load of joice or rafters, and going down hill, the load slipped forward and killed him; His sister died unmarried. My father's sister married a second husband, named Elliott, who had a son who was a Presbyterian Preacher, and a teacher in a college or Seminary at Allegheny City, Pennsylvania. They had a son who is a Physician, Dr. Elliott.

My father died in February 1812. I think it was February. I know it was in 1812; and that it was a short time before war was declared. He was fifty-five years of age at the time of his death.

My father moved to Kentucky after he was married and had three children, I think it was about 1786, three years before I was born. He settled at the place where I was born, on Gray's Run. My father had ten children, five boys and five girls, to-wit: Samuel, William, Sally, Nancy, Martha, Jane, Joseph, Rebecca, James, and John. John died when a small boy. (John Holliday died in 1796 aged 11 months) All are now (1861) dead but three of us, Jane Boyd, who is five years older than I; Rebecca McClintock, who is three

years younger than  
I; and myself.

John Boyd and her husband, Irving Boyd, live in Indiana, about fifty miles from Indianapolis, and one mile south of the railroad that goes from Indianapolis to Maton, Ohio. They have two boys, one named Rankin, and the other, I think, is named Irvin. Irvin lives in Illinois, not far west of Terre Haute, Indiana.

Rebecca McClintock, widow, has three children living. One, William, lives near Indianapolis; another, Martha Patton, widow, has two boys by her first husband, named Nesbit. She resides in Indiana about twenty miles south of Jane Boyd on the railroad that goes from Indianapolis to Cincinnati, at Greensburg. Her mother lives with her. The third child, Joseph McClintock is now (1861) in California, but talks of returning. He has a wife and children.

Sister Martha died unmarried, when she was about sixteen years of age.

(Martha Holliday died in 1803 aged 16 years)

Sister Sally died early, but left one daughter, her husband was named

Alexander Martin. The daughter has been married several years, I don't know her husband's name. (Sarah Martin died in 1804 aged 20 years)

Brother Samuel died near Pendleton Indiana, on Fall River, about 1845. He left about eight children. William, one of his sons, is a preacher, and resides in Indianapolis. Joseph, a lawyer, died a few years ago, while a member of the Legislature of Indiana. John is dead. Two of the girls live about Pendleton, the rest are all dead. One of the sons had prepared himself for the

ministry, and on his return home just after he graduated in Pennsylvania, he died. Brother William died on Grassy Creek, near Louisiana, Pike County, Mo. about the year 1830. He left five boys, William, George, Samuel, James, and Joseph; and one daughter, Martha. Sally, another daughter, died young. My brother James died near Clinton, Indiana, about 1830. (He died June 8, 1822) He was a carpenter by trade. He built the Cout (sic) House in Eaton, Ohio. He left two daughters and one son. The son, named Patton Holliday, was killed, when about twenty years old, in the time of the Black Hawk War. (James Patton Holliday died Oct. 18, 1843, aged 20 years & 9 months) He was Lieutenant, and the Military were camping out, drilling at Eton, Ohio, and tried to play a prank on the guard by going through. He was shot with a wad and died a few days later. James two daughters now live in Eaton, Ohio. One married Alfred Denny and the other Dr. Minor. One, I think, is named Fanny, the other Caroline. They were very nice women,--very.

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS. The frst thing I can recollect--about the first thing, was the death of my brother John. I, and some of the other children were sent over to a neighbor's house to tell them about his death. I recollect I was very sorry to lose my little brother.

About the next thing I can recollect is that my father kept a horse hitched outside the log cabin, with a hole in the wall, through which a chain was passed, which was fastened to the horse's neck. The chain was fastened inside, and the rattling of the chain was supposed to awaken my

father if the Indians came to attack him. Father had his gun there, too. The Indians came around the house one night, when Father was gone to the salt works, down at Big Bone, in the lower part of Kentucky. My mother put the children, myself among them, in the loft. A young girl of the neighborhood was stayng with mother while father was gone. She was so badly scared that she got under the puncheon floor. I was very much afraid, still I did not sit up all night. Mother did. The Indians chopped with their "Tom-a-hawks" at the door awhile. We could hear them talking. They were just on a stealing expedition. They stole some horses that night from old Johnny Lair, who lived over Licking, opposite us. Old Hinkson, an Indian fighter, raised some men and followed them, caught up with them near the mouth of the Licking, not far from where Cincinnati now is. Old Hinkson followed their trail, saw smoke rising from their camp, from the top of the ridge, waited until the Indians slept, crawled up and killed nearly all of them and got all the horses back. There were about twelve in all, all were killed except two, and one of them it was thought would die from the blood that was found. I recollect that the men came over to our house, to see the Indians, the next morning after the Indians were there, said it looked like they had been in our cornfield several days. My old friend George Redding was one of the men who came over.

SCHOOL DAYS. I don't believe I went to school over a year, in my whole life.

My first teacher was named Garmony, an Irishman; another

teacher's name was Hinkson, a relation of the Indian fighter. I got my arm broken, wrestling, while I was going to school to him. Notwithstanding that, I still kept up the practice of wrestling for several years. I was never thrown two best out of three in my life. I can think of a heap of foolishness away back in my life, but I don't want it down here.

FIGHTS. There were very few. I was a good stout boy nearly a man, when I and a neighbor boy got to fighting at acorn shucking. Our fathers were both present. They separated us. They had divided the piles and the hands, having a corn-shucking match. He began to throw corn from his pile to ours (sic) side, and from that, and each of us got at it, and from that we got to knocking. I don't know who got the best of it. I thought I did. I had a fight in Pike Co. Mo. with a man by the name of McGowan. He had abused his daughter, and she had come to my house because of his bad treatment. He came over to abuse her, and he abused my wife. I was not at home. The first time I saw him afterward, I accused him of abusing my wife. He denied it, gave me the "lie", and I downed him and pounded him well. He had me arrested with a "Forthwith" and taken before the Justice of the Peace. When I was walking up to the "Squires", McGowan, with other men, was standing before the Justice's office. I said to him, "McGowan, you have a black eye, what's the matter with it?" I have forgotten the reply he made. We went to trial, had jury. He was fined five dollars for abusing a witness, and had the costs to pay. I never

had any  
difficulties about the girls.

LOVE SCRAPS. I will now record my love scrapes. I was a very bashful boy.

We had a neighbor, in Kentucky named George Redding, who had a daughter named Rebecca, about my age. We lived within a half a mile of one another

and grew up together. My elder brother used to hire her to hug and kiss me,  
when we were six or seven years old, and it used to plague me awfully.

When I was fourteen or fifteen years of age, my father moved into his new

house, on the opposite side of his farm, considerably increasing the distance

between our house and Mr. Redding's. Rebecca came over to our house about a

month after we moved, to pay the family a visit. I found out she was in the

house, and I expected my brothers to resort to the old habit of getting her to

annoy me. I walked about the yard, considering what I ought to do in the

premises, and considering how I could, most successfully go through the

expected contest in the evening. I found a resolution and went immediately into

the house. After supper, when we were all settled comfortably around the fire,

my brothers, just as I had expected, suggested to Rebecca that, as we had not

met for some time, she ought to kiss me. She looked at me archly, and seemed

to be asking herself whether there was any impropriety in it or not, and before I

had time to think about it she was sitting on my lap trying to kiss me. Quick as

though, I now carried out my resolution, previously formed, by running my hand in her bosom. It was her turn to blush, and to attempt to

get away from my  
other encircling arm. She never tried to kiss me again. She  
afterwards became  
the wife of my elder brother, William Holliday. The first girl I  
ever loved was  
named Jane Edgar, the sister of the Presbyterian minister who  
lately died in

Nashville, Tenn. She married after I did.

(To the question, "How many girls did you ever love?", he  
answered, "I can not  
tell you that, My dear!") S.N.H.

POLITICAL OPINIONS. I was first a Republican candidate  
against the  
Federalists. I believe I voted for a President before Jackson's  
time, I have voted  
the Democratic ticket all my life, and have no reason to regret  
my course. I was  
very much opposed to the Know Nothings, and I do not regret  
that. I believe  
they had a great deal to do with bringing us into our present  
troubles and civil

war. I never ran for political office, and never desired any. My  
neighbors have

asked me to run for justice of the peace but I do not desire  
such honors--I have  
always declined.

USE OF TOBACCO. I began to chew tobacco, when I was  
about twenty years

of age, chewed about forty years, and have not taken a chew  
since. I have

smoked ever since I have quit chewing, except about six  
months. I quit

chewing three or four times, a year or so at a time, one time I  
quit for three

years. I cannot say that the use of tobacco has ever injured  
me, it has been a  
great luxury to me.

SWEARING. I never swore an oath in my life to my  
recollection.

WHISKEY. I used to take my drams, but never was drunk or  
gaggy groggy. I

have not tasted liquor for more than thirty years. I never kept whisky to drink,  
but would get it for "gatherings," log-rollings, corn-shuckings,  
house-raisings,  
and the like.

RELIGION. I professed religion when I was about twenty five years of age,  
and joined the old Presbyterian Church, and continued a member of that church, until I came to Missouri. Three or four years after I came to Missouri, I joined the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and have remained a member of that Church to this time. I have tried to live the life of a true Christian. I have a hope in Christ. That grows brighter as my hair grows whiter for the grave.

I have never been before a Church session but twice, that I recollect. I had a kind of a trial for hitting McGowan. I went before the session myself, of my own motion, and told them what I had done, and, that I was not sorry for it.

They agreed that I was justifiable.  
I was up before the session again, at the instance of a neighbor named Gip Crim. He charged that I had told Peter Brammer, on one occasion that if he would come out, I would give him, Brammer, a thrashing. I got Brammer to go to the session to testify and he said that there were not a word of truth in Crim's statement. I was triumphantly acquitted.

MILITARY. When I was about twenty years of age, I was elected Captain of Militia Co., and was Captain for several years, until I left Harrison Co., Ky. During the time I volunteered, as mounted rifleman or Dragoons in Dick Johnson's Regiment, from Ky. in 1813. We volunteered for three months.

Brother Samuel was out before we were. He went from Indiana, not far from Pendleton. He was an infantry officer, and was out when peace was declared.

My brother William and myself were in the battle of the Thames, in Canada, in Oct., 1813. Both of us were actively engaged in the battle both close together.

Our platoon was the first platoon behind Johnson, in centre Co. James Coleman was our Captain. He was nearly scared to death. He backed--backed over the swamp during the fight. He ordered the men to go back over the swamp, and many of them went. I did not go. I stuck it out, my dear. About one third of the Co. gave back over the swamp, by Coleman's orders, they were the timid portion of the Co. but the bravest talkers. Coleman himself, used to be always blaming Gen. Harrison for the way in which he carried on the war, saying that if he were General, what he would do, but I never heard him say a word against Harrison after that battle. Harrison was a soldier, I know that. He passed along the line not two minutes before the Indians gave way.

Johnson's orders were to crash through, but the Indians were still all around, in the thickets, behind old logs, stumps, and trees, all around us. Johnson gave the orders to light and give them "Indian Play". We jumped off and got behind trees. I shot twice, at Indians both times. I think I killed one I saw him loading. They don't get behind the biggest trees, but about the size of a man's body.

Clem Jennings ran to Moravian town, two and one half miles. Lieutenant Logan, a brave man, was wounded and died eight or nine days after the battle.-----

Guthrie was shot twice, and lived only eight or nine days. He was the son of the author of Guthrie's arithmetic. When Coleman gave his orders to go back over the swamp, my brother William turned to me and said, "Let us go over the Swamp." I told him "No." He went back, and he thought I was killed until after we got to Moravian town. He was sick. I got my horse the second day after the battle, he ran back five or six miles. Tecumseh was killed in this battle, Johnson did not kill him, I saw Tecumseh's body, the day after the battle. The soldiers had cut off a great deal of skin, to make razor straps. My "Mess" were William Phillips and myself, all of them came to Missouri, except James Trimble, and his widow came. Thomas Hurd did live near Florida, Monroe Co., Mo. He is now (1863) dead. Hiram Phillips, now called "Judge," waited on me when I was married. He resides six or seven miles from Columbia Mo., Boone Co. The widow of James Trimble lives in the eastern part of Randolph Co., Mo. Hiram Phillips was Orderly Sargent (sic) of our Company. The Orderly Sargent has the most troublesome duties in the Company, and he ought to get twice as much wages as are allowed him. The next summer after I came to Missouri, I was appointed Adjutant in the Militia, and so remained until I was elected Major. Am called "Major" to this very day. My wife's grandfather, William McCune, was a prisoner with the Indians, three years during the Revolutionary War. He saw sights, my dear. He was ironed

frequently, hand cuffed. His wife never heard from him during this time. His wife's father used to quiz her, about setting out, after her husband returned.

RESIDENCE. I was born in Bourbon Co., Ky., afterwards cut off, as Harrison

Co., as I said before, I lived there until 1817, when I came to the territory of

Missouri, and settled on Ramsey's Creek, now in Pike Co., then in St. Charles

Co., I lived at Ramsey's Creek one year, and then moved to Spencer's Creek,

one mile from Elk Springs, now Pike Co., Mo. and resided there until 1837,

then I moved to Monroe Co., Mo., about eight miles west of Paris, where I now live.

MARRIAGES AND FAMILY. I married Nancy McCune, the daughter of John

McCune, March 26th 1816. She died January 9th 1834. Our eldest son,

William, was born in Kentucky. Shortly after his birth we moved to Missouri.

The Company who came to Missouri together were:

My wife's grandfather, William McCune and family. Benjamin Gray and

family. He married a daughter of William McCune, my wife's grandfather.

William Holliday, my elder brother and his family. His wife was Rebecca

Redding. William Biggs, and his family. He married Betsey, my wife's eldest

sister. John McCune, my wife's father and his family. His wife was named

Polly Shannon, a daughter, I think, of John Shannon. Myself and my family.

I only had half of a four-horse team to move in my father-in-law having the

other half, beside his one other wagon. There were six families of us, and I am

the only man now living of the whole company. There are but

two of the women now living, Betsey Biggs, widow of William Biggs, and Rebecca, the widow of my brother William. She married a second husband named Grant, and is again a widow. She still lives in Grass Creek. In coming to Missouri, we came by Louisville, then crossed the Ohio river, thence to Smelser's Ferry, about two miles above Alton, Illinois, where we crossed the Mississippi River, thence to St. Charles, thence up to Ramsey's Creek. My wife died in 1834. I married a second time in 1837 to Elizabeth F. East, widow of Daniel East, in Monroe Co., Mo. My wife's maiden name was Dickerson. By my first marriage, I had nine children, the youngest dying in child-birth, eight, four boys and four girls, arrived to maturity, and are now all living except my eldest daughter Polly, who died a few years since, leaving seven children. She married Daniel Atterberry who died a few years after my daughter. He was killed by a falling of a tree, a limb flew back and killed him. My children were named William Harvey, John James, Thompson, Polly Sloan, Rebecca Jane, Martha Ann, Samuel Newton, and Elizabeth Brewer. All married and are now living except Polly Sloan, whom I have spoken of above. William married Jenetta Harper. They reside in Monroe Co., Mo. She is the niece of my present wife. John James married Lucretia Foree. They reside in St. Louis (1863) and have eight children living, two dead. Thompson married Mary Ann Gwyn. She died a few years since. He married a

second time, Paulina Arnold, widow, whose maiden name was Phillips.

Thompson had five children of his first marriage, and two of his last, and his

present wife has four children by her first marriage.

Thompson also resides in

Monroe Co., Mo.

Rebecca Jane was married to Samuel H. Dickerson, the nephew of my second

wife. They reside in Randolph Co., Mo. and have a large family of children

nine living and three dead.

Martha Ann married William Foster. They are now (1863) in Texas; they have

one child named Finis Harvey.

Samuel Newton married Maria F. Glasby, they reside in St. Louis and have two children.

Elizabeth Brewer married Adam Gwyn, a brother of Thompson's first wife.

They reside in Monroe Co., Mo. and have four children living and two dead.

My father was a hard working, industrious, steady man. He was strictly

temperate. I never heard of his being groggy in my life. My mother had four brothers, all steady religious men, to-wit; Thomas, Joseph, William, and John

Patton. She had five sisters, Sally Morrow, Nancy Steele, Rosanna Mitchell,

Polly Wright, and Elizabeth McCune. Elizabeth's first husband was named

Maxwell, her second husband William McCune, my first wife's grandfather, by

whom she had four children, William, Joseph Polly Lacy, and one other.

William McCune is married and lives in Pike Co., Mo., Joseph married a Miss

Edwards by whom he had one child who I think is named William. He died and

his widow married a second time.

My wife's father, John McCune, was married twice. He had nine children by his first marriage, Betsey, Susan, William, Polly, John S., Harvey T., Nancy, my wife, and Margaret. By his second marriage he had three children, Harry E., Joseph, and Rebecca. Susan, William, and Polly are now dead. Susan first married Kinkead, who only lived a few years, and afterward she married Thomas Kerr. She left three children living at the time of her death, to-wit; John J., Richard T., and Susan Kerr. John J. Kerr married Margaret Braley, and has several children. He resides in Nebraska City, Nebraska Territory. Richard T. Kerr married a daughter of James Rains. He resides in southwest Missouri. Susan married John C. McBride, by whom she had four children. She died two or three years since, in Monroe Co., Mo. where her husband now resides. William McCune married Jane Guy. He resides in Pike Co., Mo. near Elk Springs. He died several years since leaving five children, John, Savory, Guy, William, and James. His widow is still living. John, Savory, and Guy are all married and reside in Pike Co., Mo. Polly married a Brewer and died shortly after her marriage leaving an infant child who died soon afterwards. Betsey married William Biggs. He died many years since leaving a large family, to-wit; John, George, Polly, Milton, Nancy, Emily, Susan, Elizabeth, and Marion, William K., Margaret, and Richard. Emily married Jack Briscoe. She died several years since, leaving two sons, William and James. The others are all living and married.

John S. McCune married Ruth Anna Glasby, by whom he had five children. He resides in St. Louis. Harvey T. McCune married Polly Matson. He had two children living, to-wit; Enoch L. and Susan. He resides in southwest Missouri on Spring River. Margaret married Thomas Cleaver. They reside in Monroe Co., Mo. have six children, I think. I neglected to state, when I spoke of the Indians attacking our house during father's absence, that mother, by watching all night, became a little sleepy by daylight. She was on her knees with her axe in her hand, by the door, when she heard a noise over the door, and thinking it was the Indians, she struck her axe above the door, and cut into a roll of cloth that she had lying there, the end of it, being loose, made a noise by being blown by the wind. The preceding thirteen pages (in the original type-written document) are an exact copy of the autobiography of Joseph Holliday, copy annotated by his son Samuel Newton Holliday of St. Louis, Mo., and are in possession of Mrs. Callie Jones of Independence, Mo. This copy made September 19, 1931 by (Mrs. Leon) Kathryn H. Campbell, 1904 Armstrong Ave., Kansas City, Ks.

Signed.

(Mrs. Leon) Kathryn H. Campbell  
1904 Armstrong Ave,  
Kansas City, Ks.

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The Western Citizen, Paris, Kentucky, Wednesday, March 27, 1816--

Marriages: On Thursday last by Rev. Davis Biggs, Capt. Joseph Holiday of Harrison County to Miss Nancy McCune, daughter of John McCune of this

county.

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## A common background

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The Holliday name took two paths, each dependent on the color of the namesake's skin. (C-P photo/Hal Smith)

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Presidents Bush, Mark Twain and the legacy of slavery -- A lesson for Black

History Month

By Terrell Dempsey

For the Courier-Post

This is a tale of slavery, Mark Twain and two American Presidents for Black History Month.

In May 1845, Samuel Clemens, the boy who would become Mark Twain, was 9

years old. His father John Marshall Clemens was down and out. Though he had

practiced law in Kentucky and Tennessee, he was not an attorney in Hannibal.

The only income the family had was the meager fees he received for hearing

small cases in the tiny city court - a non-attorney position he held. It was a parttime

job at best.

John Marshall Clemens was pretty much at rock bottom financially in 1845. He

and his wife Jane had sold off the last of the six slaves with whom they had

begun married life. He had sold everything else he owned to satisfy his

creditors. He could not find a buyer for the large tract of rocky land he owned

in Tennessee, so he took a job. On May 5, that year, he wrote to his daughter

Pamela who was visiting friends in Florida, Mo.:

"I have removed my office of Justice to Messrs McCune & Holliday's counting

room where I have taken Mr. Dame's place as clerk - I did not

succeed in  
making such arrangements as would enable me to go into  
business  
advantageously on my own acct - and thought it best therefore  
not to attempt it  
at present."

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Although Joseph Holliday, a Monroe County businessman,  
died in 1870, slaves  
still figured prominently in his will. The Holliday name took  
two different  
paths, with one finding its way to the White House. (C-P  
photo/Hal Smith)

-----John Marshall  
Clemens may well have known the Holliday family from his  
time in Florida,  
Mo. His brother-in-law, John Quarles, still lived in Monroe  
County. Clemens  
had served on the Monroe County Commission, (then called  
the county court),  
before moving to Hannibal in 1839. While John Marshall  
Clemens had been a  
business failure, fortune had smiled on Joseph Holliday.  
Joseph had evidently  
gone into business with his in-laws. His wife's maiden name  
was McCune.

With his sons, he built up a commission merchant business in  
Monroe County.

The business maintained an office in Hannibal that was  
overseen by Joseph's  
son John James Holliday in the mid-1840s. It was in that office  
Sam Clemens's  
father clerked and conducted his court. The Hollidays brought  
groceries and  
goods up the Mississippi River by steamboat and then shipped  
them by wagon  
to Monroe County.

The Holliday family is important not just for the job they  
provided to the  
Clemens family in time of need. John James Holliday's  
daughter Nancy was

born in Hannibal in 1847. She is the great-grandmother of former President George Herbert Walker Bush and great-great-grandmother of President George W. Bush. She lived until 1942 in St. Louis. The elder President Bush turned 18 that year.

Joseph Holliday, like many Northeast Missourians in the days before the Civil War, kept the majority of his money in two assets that were immune from the shaky banking system of the time - land and slaves. In 1850 Holliday owned 10 slaves. By 1860, his human wealth had grown to 16 slaves. Twelve of the slaves in 1860 were identified by the census taker as mulatto or mixed race. It is of course difficult to determine who fathered those slaves, though one must bear in mind the observation of Mary Chesnut, famous southern Civil War diarist and wife of South Carolina Senator James Chesnut: "God forgive us, but ours is a monstrous system, a wrong and an iniquity! Like the patriarchs of old, our men live all in one house with their wives and their concubines; and the mulattoes one sees in every family partly resemble the white children. Any lady is ready to tell you who is the father of all the mulatto children in everybody's household but her own. Those, she seems to think, drop from the clouds."

Joseph Holliday lived until 1870, five years after Missouri slaves were finally set free in 1865. Although he amended his will in 1867, slaves still figured prominently in the will. They were listed because they had already been given or sold to his children during his lifetime. In one of history's little twisted

ironies, the Bush ancestor John James Holliday had been given a slave named "Walker" whom he had sold. John James Holliday's granddaughter would marry into a Walker family and two American presidents would carry the Walker name into the White House.

The white Holliday family prospered. A town was named in their honor in

1872. Holliday, Missouri was a stop on the Hannibal and Central Missouri Line, later part of the MKT Railroad, better known as the Katy.

Some descendants of the Holliday slaves, many of whom took the name

Holliday, still live in Monroe County. They are hard-working people. Patricia

Louise Holliday Minter is the living matriarch of one branch. She remembers

her grandfather Del Holliday. No one knows exactly when he was born nor

much about his family's experiences in slavery. There were two things people

of his generation did not talk about: slavery and the white folks to whom they

were related. It is clear that the black Hollidays lived a very different life than

the white descendants of the Hollidays.

"My grandmother and grandfather could not read or write," Mrs. Minter recalls.

She remembers her grandfather as a quiet man who would sit in the corner by

himself. He did not seem to enjoy life. "He acted like a slave," she said.

Mrs. Minter's father, Delbert Holliday, was born in 1901, one of 16 children.

"My father had a few years of school. He had what he called common

education. He could read and write."

Mrs. Minter, born in 1941, attended her first year of high school in Hannibal.

Though she lived in Monroe City, African American students were bused to the all-black Douglass High School 21 miles away in Hannibal. Then the State of Missouri complied with the Supreme Court decision of Brown v. Topeka Board of Education and she finished at Monroe City High School. Ironically she says she learned more in the segregated school where teachers had higher expectations of the students.

George W. Bush was born in 1946. Despite low grades, he was able to get into

Yale as a "legacy student," one of the spots reserved for children of alumni.

After being denied admission to the University of Texas Law School because

of his low LSAT scores and undergraduate grades, he was admitted to Harvard

Business School. As a private school, Harvard could overlook his academic

shortcomings and look instead at his family's social standing and political

power. Just as Mrs. Minter's race charted the course of her education, the Bush

family's prestige opened doors for the president-to-be.

Mrs. Minter's father did just about any kind of work he could find in Monroe

City. He was a butcher, sheared sheep and planted gardens for people. He had

14 children to feed and clothe. "We were poor," Mrs. Minter says, "but we

lived middle class. We had plenty to eat and good clean clothes. Momma

washed on a washboard in the back yard. We were spotless."

The White House descendants of the former slave masters invested in oil, went

to ivy-league schools, and engaged in the rich gentleman's sport of national

politics. George W. Bush owned a professional baseball team. Mrs. Minter has no complaints about her life in Monroe City

where she has lived her entire life. She says she never had to go in any back doors and could always sit wherever she wanted in the movie theater. She is proud that her mother or father could give her a note to take to the grocer and he would give her the items on credit knowing that her parents would pay the bill.

Mrs. Minter has worked since she was 11 years old. As a child she babysat for a white family. In exchange they paid for her lunches at school and gave her a little spending money. Today she still works for the same family. She sits with the mother of the children she babysat. Hers is a fine legacy, but very different from the legacy of the Holliday descendant in the White House.

And so a hardworking African American family, two American presidents, America's greatest writer and America's cruellest failure - slavery - are tied together in Missouri history - two branches from a tree named Holliday with two very different legacies. The irony would not have been lost on Mark Twain. He explored the vagaries of race and birth in his book Pudd'nhead Wilson where a mixed-race slave changes her own baby for the master's child. Her child grows up in privilege while the master's son grows up in poverty and ignorance.

We call it Black History Month, but that is not really true. It is actually American History Month. Slavery and the echoing racism touch us all.

(Special thanks to Barbara Schmidt of Tarleton State University and Vic Fischer of the Mark Twain Project. Without them this story

would have lay  
hidden in the dust of history. Thanks also to Patricia Minter,  
Guy and Sandy  
Callison of Holliday, Missouri and Sam Akers, mayor of  
Holliday for their  
assistance and gracious hospitality.)  
Spouses

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1: Nancy McCUNE

Birth: June 16, 1799 Bourbon County, Kentucky  
Death: January 9, 1834 Pike County, Missouri Age: 34  
Father: John McCUNE (1772-1852)  
Mother: Mary "Polly" SHANNON (1773-1823)  
Marriage: March 26, 1816 Bourbon County, Kentucky  
Children: William Harvey (1817->1849)  
John James (1819-1881)  
Thompson (1821-)  
Mary Sloan (1823-1851)  
Rebecca Jane (1825->1826)  
Martha Ann (1828-)  
Samuel Newton (1830-)  
Elizabeth Brewer (1831-)  
Joseph (1834-1834)

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2: Elizabeth EAST

Birth: July 5, 1795 Virginia  
Marriage: October 31, 1837 Monroe County, Missouri  
Sources  
1. 16 June 1799--George Bush genealogy

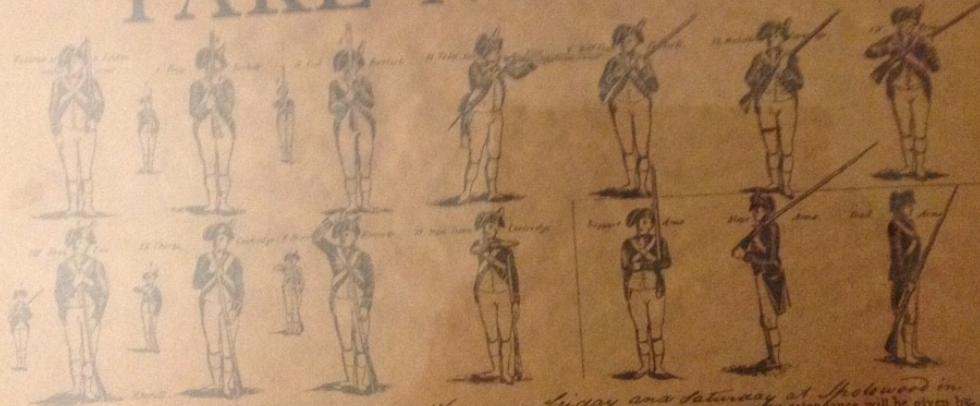
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Last Modified: February 15, 2003  
Created: February 15, 2003

Here's a recruiting poster from the time of Joseph Holliday. It was obtained by my grandmother in 1912 and she obviously felt it was valuable. i don't know if it is an original.

TO ALL BRAVE, HEALTHY, ABLE BODIED, AND WELL  
DISPOSED YOUNG MEN,  
IN THIS NEIGHBOURHOOD, WHO HAVE ANY INCLINATION TO JOIN THE TROOPS,  
NOW RAISING UNDER  
GENERAL WASHINGTON,  
FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE  
LIBERTIES AND INDEPENDENCE  
OF THE UNITED STATES,  
*Against the noble legions of foreign invaders.*

## TAKE NOTICE,



THAT  
Wednesday Evening  
Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday and Saturday at Spotswood on  
Buckingham county, attendance will be given by  
Lieutenant Colonel Aaron Ogden, with his mule and recruiting party of the 11th regiment of infantry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Aaron Ogden, for the purpose of receiving the enrollment of  
such youth of SPIRIT, as may be willing to enter into this NOBLE service.  
The ENCOURAGEMENTS at this time, to enlist, is truly liberal and generous, namely, a bounty of TWELVE dollars, an annual and fully sufficient  
sum of GOOD and CONVENIENT CLOTHING, a daily ALLOWANCE of a large and ample sum of provisions, together with SIXTY dollars a year to GO TO  
COLDEN, and SILVER PLATE ON ACCOUNT OF PAY, THE WHOLE OF WHICH THE SOLDIER MAY LAY UP FOR HIMSELF AND FRIENDS, AS ALL ARTICLES PROPER FOR HIS SUBSISTENCE AND  
CONVENIENCE PROVIDED BY LAW, WITHOUT ANY EXPENSE TO HIM.  
Those who may favour this recruiting party with their attendance as above, will have an opportunity of hearing and seeing in a more particular  
manner, the great advantages which these brave men will have, who shall embrace this opportunity of spending a few happy years in viewing the  
different parts of this beautiful continent, in the honourable and truly respectable character of a soldier, after which, he may, if he pleases return  
home to his friends, with his pockets full of money and his head COVERED with laurels.  
GOD SAVE THE UNITED STATES.

~~PRIVATE PROPERTY~~  
~~FLORENCE ALEXANDER HOLLIDAY~~  
~~PURCHASED FROM~~  
~~SARAH L. OGDEN~~  
~~OCT. 11. 1902~~

Room. EAST. 31 - WESTOVER -  
WORCESTER MASS.

This is on the back of the framed poster

From my Uncle Newt

Dear Steve and Yvonne,

I am typing this letter so you can read it.

We hope that you have a wonderful trip to Scotland and that I can help make it so. Nancy and I have been thinking about such a trip for a long time. My sister Nancy..your Aunt Nancy..and her husband Henry Simonds (Scotch) toured Scotland a few years ago and enjoyed every minute. They did not, however, try to look up any information on the Holliday side of the family which would be your Grandmother Florence Holliday.

With respect to the Holliday family history in Scotland, following is what I have been able to put together.

"John Holliday lived in Scotland and was the Bailie (Alderman) of Culross, Scotland for many years. Culross is a seaport village about 20 miles west of Edinburgh on the north coast of the Firth of Forth just off Highway A985. It would be easy to reach from Edinburgh by car.

John married Isabella McDowell about 1668. They had son they named Adam who was born in Culross August 14, 1670. Adam married Jane Macomson in Scotland on October 2, 1708 in Culross I found out. Since Ireland had been under English rule for almost six hundred years and was open to Englishmen and Scotsmen for settlements, Adam decided to move from Scotland to Northern Ireland so he moved to Rathfriland, County Down which is just south of Belfast. He took his son Samuel with him. Samuel was born in Scotland in 1709. There is more history of the family but it continues in Ireland. I will send it to you when you get back from Scotland because I am hoping that you will find out more about John Holliday when and if you go to Culross.

I cannot find out when and where John Holliday died and is buried and nothing on his wife Isabella. Perhaps, you can learn something in Culross. There is an Information and Visitor's Center in Culross. See if you can visit it and learn something and let us know.



[Return to main text](#)

## Appendix 14

# **TIGER CRUISE '94 A DREAM CRUISE ON AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER BY STEPHEN COESTER**



Dateline Pearl Harbor, the date is not December 7, 1941, but rather August 6, 1994 . It is not the "Day of Infamy that will live Forever", but rather a beautiful summer day in Honolulu. I have just arrived in Hawaii to participate in a once in a lifetime opportunity, seven days on the USS Carl Vinson CVN 70. She is the newest, most powerful nuclear powered aircraft carrier in the Navy, and is on the return trip to San Diego after completion of a six month long operational cruise. During the cruise, known as WESTPAC 94, the Carl Vinson and her Task Group consisting of a nuclear powered Cruiser, a Guided Missile Frigate, a Fast Supply Ship, and an Attack Nuclear Submarine supported the peace keeping mission in the Arabian Gulf. Daily air operations were flown over Iraq maintaining the no fly zone mandated by the United Nations.

At the Honolulu airport, I was met by my son and sponsor, Lt. Dean Coester, who is a pilot aboard the ship, along with his wife, Kathy, and my granddaughter, Kristen, age one and a half years. Kathy met the ship when it arrived a week earlier in Honolulu. Dean had not seen his child for one-third of her young life, nor his wife for the long six month separation. Multiply their experience by several thousand and one can

appreciate the personal sacrifice these families have made. We had one day together before the ship departed for the mainland. There was no doubt that we'd all go visit the Arizona Memorial in remembrance of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor over 50 years ago. The USS Arizona was one of the Battleship fleet sunk at her dock in the sneak attack on December 7, 1941. Over 1200 of her crew remain entombed in the rusting hulk beneath the clear waters. To this day, fuel oil from the Arizona's bunkers bubbles to the surface, a reminder that this was once a living ship. It was a somber trip by launch out to the viewing stand over the Arizona after viewing historical films of the events leading to the U.S. entry into World War II, and the attack on Pearl Harbor.

After bidding farewell to Kathy and Kristen, Dean and I, along with Dean's other guest, J.D. Tierny, who is Dean's brother-in-law, went aboard the aircraft carrier to register for Tiger Cruise '94. This is a program which invites male guests, known as Tigers, to ride from Honolulu to the West Coast on their sponsors' ships. Ages of the guests ranged from eight to over seventy. The program is no cost to the government with transportation and food costs aboard ship being born by the guests. We quickly learned that much of Navy life is spent standing in line, as we joined one thousand other Tigers checking in for the cruise. Each Tiger would live in his sponsor's enlisted or officer quarters. My son and his three other officers who roomed together in a two double bunk stateroom moved out to the enlisted bunking area so we could borrow their bunks. It wasn't bad if you like gray paint, lots of pipes running through your room, and the continuous noise of blowers, compressors, and aircraft landing or taking off just over your head. The living conditions are spartan, the food is plentiful if not gourmet, and a code of living has evolved that prevents minor problems from being blown out of proportion, since there just isn't anywhere to escape.

During our short week aboard, everyone from the lowest enlisted apprentice to the Admiral was unfailingly polite, cheerful and helpful to each Tiger and to each other. This was after they had been aboard for six months with only limited port liberty time. I was most impressed by the

comradeship of the whole crew. There has been a great change since I was in the Navy 30 years ago. The separation between the officers and crew is much less now, and everyone works as an integrated team of professionals. It is hard to picture how big a modern aircraft carrier is. We Tigers learned a few necessary routes; where to eat, sleep, and join our tours. Most of the ship remained a maze to us. The USS Carl Vinson is over one thousand feet long and carries a crew of 5000. It is a floating city with all the requirements and problems of a small town, plus having to be prepared to fight a war. The aircraft are catapulted to 150 mph in just three seconds to gain flying speed. Upon landing the pilot must hit one of four arresting cables mounted just forty feet apart. The ship is powered by two reactors each only six foot by ten foot and capable of providing electricity for 50,000 people.

Since my son is a pilot of the F/A18 Hornet attack fighter, I was most interested in the flight operations. During the week, Dean flew a bombing demonstration and one other hop, so I had the opportunity to watch him brief for his hop, prepare his aircraft, catapult off the ship, and land on the "postage stamp" size landing area. What a thrill for any parent! The catwalks along the ship's Island are the only accessible location for viewing the flight operations so space filled up at least two hours before flying began. These catwalks are known as "Vultures Row" for obvious reasons. One of Dean's flights was a bombing demonstration, and I can tell you that you don't want to be anywhere near a F/A18's target. These fighter jocks dropped about 20 "dumb" bombs on a target being dragged by the ship, and not one missed by more than 20 feet. As we say, close enough for government work. And this was while performing drastic evasive maneuvers and low level flight. The Desert Storms flims we all saw of precision bombing are just another day's work for these guys.

The ship is able to launch a plane every twenty seconds or land one every forty-five seconds. The Air Boss is the dictator of the Island who controls every action with an iron fist, continuously yells over the speaker system and

choreographs a cross between a ballet and a Chinese fire drill to keep the flight operations on schedule. Recognize that most of these professionals who are responsible for all of the complex tasks involved in preparing the aircraft, fueling, loading bombs and ordnance, directing aircraft on the crowded flight deck, operating catapults and arresting gear, and operating radar and communications gear are under twenty years old. In civilian life they would probably be flipping burgers somewhere. The military training program is unparalleled. The flight deck is known as one of the most dangerous places on earth, with jet intakes and exhausts, spinning propellers and helicopter blades, tie downs and heavy equipment crowded together. You have to see it to appreciate the degree of expertise demonstrated by all of these young men.

The pilots are the prima donnas aboard ship. After all, the total purpose of the whole Task Group is to launch the aircraft on their missions. The pilots are a rare breed. The "Right Stuff" is not just a catch phrase. It takes a strange combination of intelligence, confidence, teamwork, ego, and an enthusiastic joy of life to fly today's modern Naval aircraft off a tiny airfield, at night and in nasty weather; to fly in harms way, and to return to a pitching deck with a damaged plane, low on fuel. And these men would not trade places with anyone for the opportunity to risk their lives every day.

The cruise was well organized with the objective of exhausting the Tigers and filling us with an encyclopedic knowledge of shipboard life. We were offered daily tours to learn all about the ship's departments and the seven types of aircraft embarked aboard the Carl Vinson. Every squadron and department knew that they were the most important, best trained, most efficient, and had the highest morale on board ship. It was extremely informative and motivational to listen to the briefers. The Marine Corps contingent demonstrated assault tactics, performed a marvelous close order drill routine, and one evening expended 30,000 rounds of ammunition in a spectacular live fire demonstration.

These guys are tough; exactly what we need to spearhead a military assault. A Carrier Air group flight demonstration of

all the aircraft types was performed with a highlight demonstration of close formation flying by two former Blue Angels. Finally the day before reaching San Diego, the whole Air group departed so I was able to watch as over seventy aircraft were catapulted off the ship. It is a tribute to the Air group, the ship, and the Navy that every last aircraft was able to fly off after six months of near war operations over the desert.

All too soon we arrived back at the mainland. A final massive, hectic operation as the air group disembarked with all of their equipment, including bombs, fuel tanks, ordnance, maintenance and office equipment. The Tigers disembarked tired, happy, and thoroughly impressed with the state of readiness and morale of our Navy.

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## Appendix 15

# September 11, 2001 The NYC Terrorist Attack



Yvonne and I arrived home safely at 1230 am Thursday Sept. 13. We want to thank all of you that called our phone message service and sent emails asking about us. Our little

inconvenience is totally insignificant. The events which transpired on September 11 are of such tragic proportions that every man, woman and child in America has already been affected. I fear that as the list of direct victims is

known we will all know someone that has been killed or injured, and all of our lives will be altered. Be brave, be strong, be patriotic in this time of trial for the United States of America. We have been notified that so far that twelve USNA Alumni including the pilot of one of the American Airlines flights have been killed in the airplanes.

Dean is also safe. He was off duty visiting his family in California

and is presently stuck out there awaiting word from United. He knows some of the perished United employees and has often piloted those very flights. What a challenge to get the air traffic system working again.

We were on United Flight 275 which left Orlando at 0730 bound for San Francisco and then Seattle for our RVing vacation. Yvonne had just commented on what a smooth flight we were having after enjoying a good breakfast. I was watching "A Knight's Tale" to pass some of the long flight. We were somewhere over Texas. At about 0930 Eastern the pilot came on the intercom; "Folks, I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but airplanes have hit both towers of the World Trade Center." Never have I heard such a subdued voice. As with those of you who viewed the actual events, our minds refused to process this information. A few minutes later the pilot told us the skies were being cleared and that we would be diverted to Denver. Then it was Colorado Springs, landing in forty-five minutes. Immediately after that we were told that we were directed to get out of the sky immediately and would be landing at Amarillo, TX in fifteen minutes. Of the three thousand planes in the air over the U.S. at the time of the terror, we were among the last ten or twelve planes in the air in all the United States. As we were nearing the ground at maybe five hundred feet the right wing suddenly dropped steeply and I had a quick thought

that we may be crashing, but the pilot was merely correcting his final course at an airport I'm sure he had never seen before and we landed perfectly. Amarillo is a small airport and the only other planes we saw were three American Airlines aircraft. I have no idea if they belonged there or had been diverted since Amarillo is served by American, but not United. Almost immediately the rolling stairs were brought out and we debarked without taking our hand luggage.

We then saw our first TV pictures of the unbelievable carnage. No one knew what to do with us or when we would be leaving. People reacted per their personalities. I did not see anyone acting with impatience or anger over being diverted. I suggested we sit back, see what would happen and expected to get a hotel in Amarillo. Yvonne went into let's get the heck out of here mode. We were actually extremely lucky to have landed in Amarillo instead of one of the major airlines where thousands of passengers were stranded. We checked with Budget Rent a Car and they wanted \$1500 for a car to Florida. That seemed extreme so we refused. Then Yvonne found a woman, Lucille, who was renting an Advantage car to Houston for just over \$200 and whose boyfriend, Lamar, was going to drive the 1000 miles from Daytona Beach to pick her up. We found one other 32 year old man, Dave, who wanted to go back to Florida. The four of us finally retrieved all of our luggage and headed off toward Houston some six hundred miles away at 1230 Tuesday afternoon.

Our traveling companions were wonderful and not an angry word was spoken during the whole ten hour drive across the emptiness of West Texas to Dallas and then to Houston. These were really fine people. We stopped every couple of hours for pit stops and junk food. We contacted Lamar by cell phone when we arrived in Houston and he was only in Baton Rouge, LA which is still about five hours east of Houston. We got two Holiday Inn Express rooms, one for Lucille and Yvonne, and one for Dave and me. We got a little

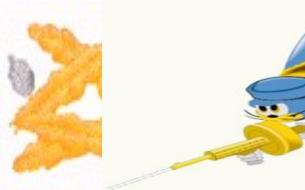
rest while Lamar continued driving toward us. At 0400 Wednesday I roused everyone and we arranged to meet a totally exhausted Lamar. It was so eerie driving into a totally empty George Bush International Airport to return the Advantage Rental Car. We left Houston at 0600 Eastern in Lamar's Suburban and finally arrived at the Florida border after passing Baton Rouge LA, New Orleans, LA, Mobile, AL at about 4 pm some ten hours later. Lucille and Lamar had people in Pensacola and decided that Lamar had to have some rest so they dropped us at Pensacola Municipal Airport where we were able to obtain an Avis car to Orlando. This decision was made just after I had opened a can of sardines so I hope I wasn't the cause of their decision to dump us! The only increased security we saw was at Pensacola Airport where they sniffed the car and looked underneath for explosives. Finally at about 1130 pm on Wednesday after about 28 hours of driving, we turned in the Avis car at Orlando Airport which was also totally empty, picked up our car from long term parking and arrived home at 1230 am This morning. Again, I can't say enough good things about Lucille, Dave, and Lamar. Even Yvonne remained positive the whole twenty-nine hours on the road.

We gave Lamar a little money for gas. Since they are addresses on this email, if either Lucille or Dave feels we owe more, please just say what our share is and it will be in the mail immediately.

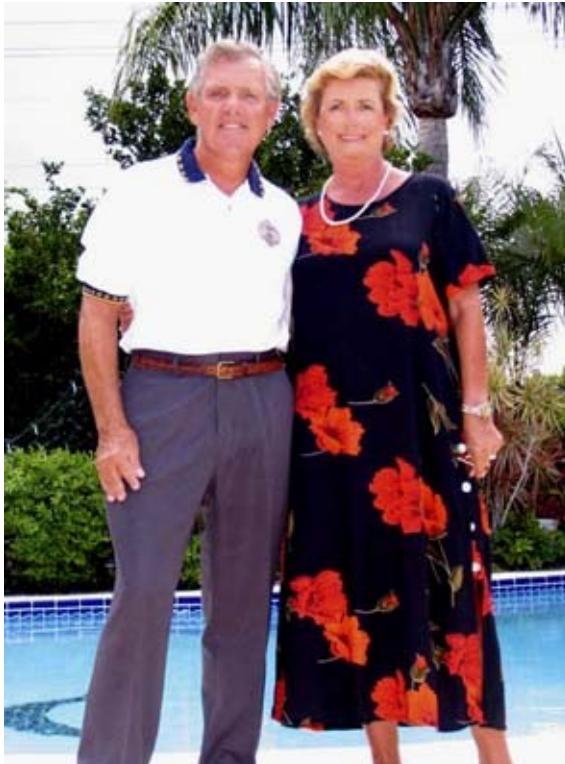
We were never in danger, but in retrospect we all feel very lucky. We were on about the only remaining early morning transcontinental flight from the East Coast, on one of the two affected airlines, loaded with fuel, in a state with associations with the terrorists. Why our flight wasn't targeted we'll never know.

God Bless America.

Appendix 16



## Steve Coester      Current Data



mediately after graduation I wed Yvonne in Stockholm, Sweden. We celebrated our 50th anniversary on June 21, 2014. [Click here](#).

We have two children. Dean was born in 1964 and Yvette in 1966. Dean is now a naval pilot after flying FA-18s and Yvette is a registered nurse. We have

three Grandchildren, Stephen (Yvette's), Kristen and Nickolas(Dean's).

After graduation, I was commissioned in the Civil Engineer Corps , my desire to fly thwarted by a deaf ear caused by Youngster Cruise naval gun fire. One year after graduation I was diagnosed with a heart problem and discharged from the Navy as an Ensign.

Prior to attending grad school as part of my CEC deal, I was assigned to the Public Works Dept at Lemoore NAS. One of my assignments in 1964 was to design a pedestal to hold an A-4 Skyhawk near the

entrance. After my Seabees completed the big concrete pedestal we mounted a Seabee statue on top of it and had a dedication ceremony. We didn't have the A-4 yet. They were phasing out the A-1 Skyraider at that time and during the ceremony the A-1 squadron flew over in formation and dropped leaflets. We picked them up and they paraphrased the old Tareyton cigarette commercial saying "We'd Rather Fight than Switch!"



Just before being medically discharged I was tasked to set up the hangers for the brand new A-7 Corsair which hadn't arrived yet. I spent hours in a secure room reviewing classified specifications.

Life at Lemoore was wonderful for us newlyweds. Lots of trips to Sequoia and Yosemite National Parks, tennis and squash tournaments and a good boss in Cdr Rumble (later RADM) and his lovely wife Althea. A big celebration at the Lemoore Oclub was planned for Yvonne's 21st birthday which was abruptly canceled when President Kennedy was assassinated on her day, November 22, 1963.



**Yvonne In  
Drag**

**Graduation**

**June  
21, 1963 in  
Stockholm,  
Sweden**

**<="" td="">**

From my medical separation from the Navy in late 1964 until my retirement in 1997, I launched rockets at Kennedy Space Center and Canaveral Air Force Station for Boeing, General Dynamics, Rockwell and Boeing again. . My specialties were propulsion and pneumatics, as well as the associated electronics, instrumentation and computer software. In 1972, I got my MBA from Florida State University. I worked on the Apollo/Saturn V, Skylab, Atlas-Centaur, Titan-Centaur, and Space Shuttle programs. Biggest work thrill was launching Apollo 11 to the moon and the biggest challenge was preparing the Shuttle Main Propulsion System for its first launch. I was the Supervisor of Space Shuttle Main Propulsion Engineering. After contract transition I became a MPS System Specialist. I helped to launch 115 missions from

the launch control room during my career. I retired in 1997 and Yvonne and I continue to live in our Rockledge, Fl home.

I played tournament tennis winning the 12th Naval District singles and doubles in 1964 while being processed out of the Navy because of my heart problem. Strange! I continued playing local tournaments in Florida until the onset of arthritis made me hang up my racket at age thirty-five. For another ten years I played pretty competitive racketball, but now walk, bike, and swim and ski for exercise.

From 1967 until 1990 SCUBA diving and camping were the family's major recreational activities with many trips to the Florida Keys, Bahamas, Mexico, Honduras, and Hawaii, and many good ([click link](#)) [shark story](#) and [another shark story](#). Also a couple of tales about an [octopus and a moray eel](#)

We were introduced to snow skiing in 1995 and became hooked so that now it rules our lives. Instead of sending all of our money to the University of Florida for our kids' education, it now goes West to the ski resorts of California, Colorado, Utah, and British Columbia.

My local grandson Stephen started playing tennis in May 2004 and I started hitting a little to help him improve. I found out I could manage the pain and now after a twenty-eight year rest I'm playing about five times a week including an over-fifty league.



<="" td="">

### **Young Steve Tennis**



<="" td="">

### **Old Steve Tennis**

Yvonne developed her painting and craft skills and with a little ambition on our part could have beat Martha Stewart to the punch. With some trepidation she followed me into the depths and up on the slopes, but became competent in everything she tries. She has made our marriage a complete joy for all of these years.



Apollo/SaturnV



Saturn1B



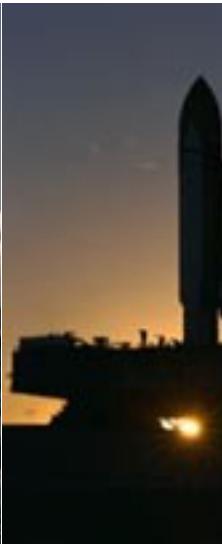
Atlas/  
Centaur



Titan/  
Centaur



Shuttle Liftoff



Shuttle at  
Twilight



Full Moon over Shuttle

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